prepared for:

Western Regional Office
Canadian Parks Service

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Lake O'Hara Visitor Survey

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Judy Otton
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Dear Judy Otton:

Regarding: Final Report - Lake O'Hara Visitor Survey

Praxis is pleased to submit 40 copies of the final report for the Lake O'Hara Visitor Survey.

Yours sincerely,

Praxis

per Richard Roberts

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1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

The Lake O'Hara area of Yoho National Park is one of the most popular backcountry hiking destinations in the Rocky Mountains. Visitors are attracted by the exceptional scenery, ease of access (by a privately operated bus), extensive trail system and variety of overnight accommodation facilities (private lodge, Alpine Club of Canada shelter and 30-site campground).

In the early 1970s, when use was unrestricted, a significant amount of environmental degradation occurred, caused by overuse. A number of management actions were implemented to correct this problem, including overnight and day-use quotas, trail upgrading, and visitor education programs. These actions have been so successful at reducing environmental concerns that questions are now being asked (by visitors and park managers) about the appropriateness and/or extent of the user restrictions. It should be noted that a considerable number of potential visitors are turned away each summer.

The Yoho National Park Management Plan (approved in November 1988) directs that an "area plan" be developed for the Lake O'Hara area. Area planning commenced in 1989 and is addressing issues such as:

- defining the type of visitor experience to be offered in this area, as well as its role and market position;
- a rational visitor management strategy which addresses environmental and social concerns;
- providing facilities and services to meet the needs of day users;
- the appropriate scale of development; and
- locations for new/relocated visitor and support facilities.

The last formal survey of Lake O'Hara visitors occurred in 1972. Since that time, much has changed with respect to demand, visitor expectations and perceptions, as well as the Canadian Parks Service management philosophies and techniques. The 1972 survey is out of date and does not provide information which is critical to the development of sound area plan proposals.

In 1988, a consultant (Dave Kaegi and Associates) was hired to review relevant literature concerning visitor management and surveys in similar background areas and recommend potential strategies for use at the Lake O'Hara area. The consultant identified a number of information gaps, and developed and pre-tested a questionnaire to fill these gaps. The Lake O'Hara Visitor Survey was developed using Kaegi and Associates' work as a starting point.

Objectives

The objectives of the Lake O'Hara Visitor Survey are:

> Objective One: To obtain an accurate visitor profile of Lake O'Hara users. This profile will include demographics of the visitors, visitor's reasons for coming to Lake O'Hara, and expectations for the visit.
>
> In order to minimize negative impacts of visitor use on the environment and the recreation experience, Park Managers are seeking ways to optimally control and manage visitation to the Lake O'Hara area, in addition to providing appropriate facilities and services. An accurate visitor profile will provide Park Managers with the necessary information they require to develop management techniques that can accommodate both user and management concerns.
>
> Objective Two: To determine user views and preferences towards present and alternate visitor management techniques that may be appropriate for the Lake O'Hara area.
>
> An essential part of this study is the assessment of alternate visitor management techniques that may be appropriate for the Lake O'Hara area. The survey will help determine the preferences of Lake O'Hara users toward various management techniques.
>
> Objective Three: To estimate the visitor capacity of the Lake O'Hara area, based on the perceptions of visitors (to be used in conjunction with environmental factors). This will help to define what constitutes "crowding" at Lake O'Hara.

1.2 Overall Process

This study was a joint effort between the Canadian Parks Service and Praxis. Praxis designed the survey, based on CPS requirements, and trained CPS staff to administer the survey. CPS staff at Lake O'Hara were responsible for administering and collecting the surveys. Lake O'Hara Lodge staff also participated; they attended the training session and collected surveys on the bus (Lodge staff drive the buses). Praxis analysed the data, and submitted an "Author's Outline" presenting the initial findings. Further analysis was completed based on feedback from CPS, and the final report was completed.

1.3 Methodology

In preparing for the survey of Lake O'Hara visitors, the following assumptions, estimates and methods were developed. After describing these, modifications resulting from "field conditions" are described.

Population of the Survey

All park visitors visiting the Lake O'Hara area between June 20 and September 27, 1989, were considered the survey population, except those under the age of 12, who were excluded for reasons of motivation and understanding. Canadian Park Service, Lake O'Hara Lodge and ACC staff were not considered part of the survey population. The total survey population was estimated to be 7510 people.

The study design was based on two assumptions:

> Assumption One: Based on known information and data (i.e. total number of Lake O'Hara bus riders over the summer season versus the total reported accommodation figures of the campground, Lodge and ACC hut, and that the length of time required by a day user to hike into and out of the Lake O'Hara area dictates that the visitor ride the bus), an estimated 95 percent of park users who access the Lake O'Hara area do so by the Lake O'Hara bus.
>
> Assumption Two: The peak period of visitation to Lake O'Hara is June through September (based on previous visitor use statistics).

Based on these assumptions, it was decided that 95 percent of the questionnaires would be administered to those Lake O'Hara visitors who access the area by bus. All questionnaires would be distributed between June 20 and September 27, 1989.

There are two major groups within the survey population, which can be further divided into four subgroups:

- Day-use Visitors
- Overnight Visitors
  - Alpine Club of Canada Visitors
  - Lake O'Hara Lodge Guests
  - Campers

The survey design permits a statistically valid analysis for the entire population. However, conclusions regarding the four subgroups (Day-use Visitors, Alpine Club Visitors, Lodge Visitors and Campers) are subjective and are not based on statistical validity, due to the smaller numbers within each group. It would be desirable to have statistically valid analyses for the four sub-groups, but the available resources made this unfeasible. There is a sufficient numbers of responses to achieve statistical validity for comparing day-use visitors with overnight visitors.

Sample Size

To attain a precision of ± five percent and a confidence level of 95 percent, 365 completed questionnaires were needed. The precision level means that if this visitor survey was undertaken 20 times, with different samples, the results would be the same for 19 of the samples within a five percent variation.

Surveys using self administered questionnaires usually receive a 40 percent to 60 percent response rate. To compensate for this relatively low response rate, 912 questionnaires needed to be distributed to ensure that 365 completed questionnaires were received. Parks surveys usually have a higher response rate, so this was expected to be more than sufficient.

Selection of Buses to be Surveyed

The questionnaires were initially administered to every 12th bus. This is based on the following calculations:

Throughout the 100 day summer season, the bus was scheduled to make a run up to Lake O'Hara three times throughout the day. The scheduled runs were at 8:30 hrs, 11:30 hrs, and 16:30 hrs. During busy periods, the morning schedule usually required that two buses transport visitors up to Lake O'Hara. One additional run was scheduled for every Friday evening throughout the summer season. Consequently the potential number of times the buses make a run up to Lake O'Hara transporting visitors is 450.

Number of bus trips to Lake O'Hara (June 20 - Sept. 27 = 100 days)

June	10 days x 3 buses =	30 buses
July & August	60 days x 5 buses =	300 buses
September	15 days x 4 buses =	60 buses
	15 days x 3 buses =	45 buses
each Friday eve	15 days x 1 bus =	15 buses
Total		450 buses

Based on an average occupancy rate of 70 percent (26 people per bus), 35 buses need to be surveyed throughout the summer season (915 questionnaires/26 people per bus = 35 buses). Therefore every 12th bus was to be surveyed (35 buses/450 buses = every 12.85 bus; every 12th bus was chosen to be conservative).

Field Procedures

The questionnaire was distributed to the study population using two methods. The first targeted those individuals who arrived by the Lake O'Hara bus, while the second targeted those who hiked into the area. It was not originally planned to sample walk-in visitors, but during the pretest, CPS field staff suggested that they should be included, as a key group that would otherwise be missed.

Visitors who access the area by the Lake O'Hara bus

All visitors on every 12th bus were provided the opportunity to participate in the survey (see Bus Selection Process following). At the end of each day, the bus driver who transported the visitors back to the parking lot made an announcement

reminding the respondents to drop off the completed questionnaires at the collection box in the parking lot, and pointed out the box when the bus arrived. Visitors continuing to the Post Hotel were asked to leave their questionnaires with the bus driver, who then dropped them in one of the collection boxes or gave them to the Campground attendant.

Visitors who access the area by foot

Visitors who access Lake O'Hara area by foot are considered to be overnight users. The time constraints of hiking from the parking lot to the Lake O'Hara area and back precludes day-users. Therefore it was assumed that any individual who hiked into the area will be spending the night at one of the accommodation facilities. Individuals who hiked into the area would be identified by the front desk lodge staff if staying at the lodge, by the campground attendant if staying at the campground, or the ACC custodian for visitors staying at the Elizabeth Parker hut. Every 12th walk-in visitor to each of the three accommodations were offered a questionnaire. The same short preamble was given to these individuals as was given on the bus.

Locked drop-off boxes for completed questionnaires were provided at: 1) the Lake O'Hara area base parking lot; and 2) the Lake O'Hara wardens cabin. In addition, the bus drivers offered to collect surveys, in particular for visitors riding to the Post Hotel.

Changes Resulting from Field Conditions

Due to very poor weather and low bus ridership during the early summer, sampling was increased from every 12th bus to every 5th bus from August 17 to the end of September. Ridership increased in September because of good weather, resulting in a larger sample than expected, 432 completed questionnaires.

A number of factors may have affected surveying:

- the drop boxes were not installed by CPS staff until August 25th. A temporary box was installed in the parking lot, but could only hold five surveys. In addition, the key for this temporary box was lost from late July until late August, so the box could not be emptied on a regular basis.

- surveys were distributed on the bus, when visitors were also given a talk on the Lake O'Hara environment. This may have made visitors more environmentally aware than usual.

- Because of miscommunication, ACC walk-in visitors were not surveyed. It is not known how many walk-in visitors stayed in the ACC hut, although ACC personnel indicated the number was very small.

1.4 Potential Visitors Turned Away

The major factor affecting the survey is that people who were not able to get a reservation to Lake O'Hara were not included in the sample. Only people successful at making a reservation were sampled. From mid-July to the end of the season, CPS staff at the Information Centre kept records of the number of people or groups who were refused entry to Lake O'Hara. According to these records, for day use reservations, an average of 17 per day were refused entry, representing 63 people (based on an average day use group size of 3.7). The day-use quota is 36/day, so more than twice as many people were turned away each day, on average, than were allowed into the area. Refusals for campsites averaged 7 per day, representing about 23 percent of total campground capacity (30 sites). These figures are approximate, and do not include refusals early in the season.

1.5 Survey Response

Based on 1988 attendance figures, 365 completed questionnaires were required. A total of 423 bus-in questionnaires were received, in addition to 23 walk-in surveys, three incomplete questionnaires, and six returned too late to be included in the analysis.

Attendance in 1989 was higher than in 1988: 1988 total attendance was 6366, compared to 9033 in 1989, an increase of 42 percent. Even with this increased population, the oversampling provided the required statistical significance.

A response rate of 58 percent was achieved, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{432 returned}}{\text{752 issued}} = 58 \text{ percent}$$

An additional 23 questionnaires were received from people who walked in. These questionnaires were analysed separately. Because the number of walk-in surveys is so low, walk-in data cannot provide any statistical validity, but only patterns and trends. All analysis in this report is based on the "bus-in" sample (432 respondents) unless specifically indicated as "walk-in".

Of the 432 respondents in the bus-in sample, all but one respondent indicated they came in by bus. One respondent in the bus-in sample indicated he/she had walked in. It is not clear why this respondent coded the response in this manner, however, this does not affect the analysis. All 23 respondents in the walk-in sample indicated they walked in.

Question 1: What day of the week was your "survey day"?

The "survey day" was defined in the questionnaire as the day of the visit at Lake O'Hara for day users, and the last full day at Lake O'Hara for overnight visitors. Table 1.5.1 presents the "survey day" of all respondents. The most frequent survey days were Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

For day users, the most frequent survey days were Friday (22%) and Saturday (22%). The percent of day users whose survey day was Sunday was surprisingly low (9%). The percent of respondents was higher for both Thursday (18%) and Monday (14%). The most frequent survey days for campers were Saturday (28%) and Sunday (25%), followed by Friday (19%). For Lodge guests, the more frequent survey days were Saturday (23%) and Sunday (20%). For ACC visitors, the most frequent survey days were Sunday (29%), Friday (27%), and Tuesday (20%). The most frequent survey days for walk-ins were Tuesday (38%) and Saturday (24%).

Table 1.5.1 Survey Day[1]
percent; n = 432, walk-ins n = 21

	mon	tues	wed	thur	fri	sat	sun
day	14	9	8	18	22	22	9
camper	9	7	4	7	19	28	25
lodge	16	8	13	7	14	23	20
ACC	10	20	2	2	27	10	29
Total (%)	**13**	**10**	**7**	**12**	**20**	**22**	**17**
walk-ins	19	38	5	10	5	24	0

Question 5: Are you a: Day Visitor, Camper, Lodge Guest, Alpine Club of Canada?

Of the visitors surveyed, almost one-half were day users (43%), compared to just under one quarter each of campers (23%) and lodge guests (22%), and 11 percent ACC visitors. Walk-in respondents were either day users (35%), or campers (65%) (see Table 1.5.2).

Proportionally more day users and lodge guests, and fewer campers, were surveyed than actually visited the park (based on bus reservation figures). This may be a result of the sampling method; it was more likely that more short term visitors would be sampled than long-term visitors. For example, if the quotas are for ten day-visitors per day, and ten campers per night, and the campers all stay two nights each, there will be ten day users and five campers on the bus per day, on average.

[1] All data is derived from bused-in respondents unless specifically noted as walk ins.

Table 1.5.2 Visitor Type

	Bus-in		Walk-in		Actual Bus-in Visitation
	#	%	#	%	%
day	185	42.8	7	35.0	35
camper	99	22.9	13	65.0	44
lodge	96	22.2	0	0.0	11
ACC	49	11.3	0	0.0	10
other	3	.7	0	0.0	-
Total	**432**	**100**[2]	**20**	**100**	**100**

1.6 Structure of the Report

Responses to the questionnaire are presented in the following three chapters, based on the three study objectives defined earlier in this report. Chapter 2 presents the questions relating to visitor profile. Chapter 3 analyses responses to questions regarding management techniques, while Chapter 4 presents the results of questions regarding visitor capacity. Chapter 5 contains specific comments and suggestions for the facilities, trails and management of Lake O'Hara. Observations and conclusions are presented in Chapter 6.

[2] Rounding may result in percentages not totalling 100 percent.

2. Visitor Profile

2.1 Introduction

The first objective of the Visitor Survey is:

> To obtain an accurate visitor profile of Lake O'Hara users. This profile will include demographics of the visitors, visitor's reasons for coming to Lake O'Hara, expectations for the visit, and satisfaction.

Visitor Profile	• Type of visitor • Length of stay • Number of previous visits to Lake O'Hara • Number of people in party • Group type • Type of visitor activity • Outdoor recreation skill level • Place of residence • Age, gender
Visitor expectations and satisfaction with visit	• Reason for visit • Visitor satisfaction with the day's experience

2.2 Visitor Profile

In this section, visitor profile information is presented, including visitor type, the number of nights overnight visitors stayed, how often visitors have been to Lake O'Hara in the past, group size and type, visitor activities, how often visitors have participated in backcountry recreation in the past year, experience level as an outdoorsperson, place of residence, age, and gender.

As presented in Table 1.5.2 (Section 1.5), 43 percent of bus-in visitors surveyed were day users, 23 percent were campers, 22 percent lodge guests, and 11 percent ACC visitors. Walk-in respondents were either day users (35%), or campers (65%) (Note: it was expected there would be no walk-in day user respondents).

Question 5: Overnight visitors were asked how many nights they stayed.

For visitors who stayed overnight, it was most common to stay two nights: 16 percent stayed one night, 41 percent two nights, 21 percent three nights, 10 percent 4 nights, and 11 percent more than four nights (see Table 2.2.1).

Campers are allowed to stay a maximum of four nights. Half of the campers surveyed stayed two nights, 28 percent stayed one night, 17 percent stayed three nights, and only five percent stayed for the maximum four nights allowed.

ACC visitors were very similar to campers (although there is no limit to length of stay): 22 percent stayed one night, 41 percent two nights, 17 percent three nights, and seven percent four nights. Unlike the campers, 13 percent of ACC visitors stayed five nights. Surveyed walk-in visitors who stayed overnight were all campers, but generally stayed longer than bus-in campers: 15 percent stayed one night, 31 percent two nights, 38 percent three nights, and 15 percent four nights.

There is no limit to the length of stay of lodge guests. Lodge guests stay much longer than campers or ACC visitors: only two percent stayed one night, while 31 percent stayed two nights, and 25 percent stayed three nights. Eighteen percent stayed four nights, four percent five to six nights, 11 percent seven nights, and nine percent from eight to 18 nights.

Table 2.2.1 Number of Nights Stayed
percent; n = 239, walk-in n = 20

# nights	Total	Camper	Lodge	ACC	Walk-in
1	16	28	2	22	15
2	41	50	31	41	31
3	21	17	25	17	38
4	10	5	18	7	15
5	3	0	2	13	0
6	1	0	2	0	0
7	4	0	11	0	0
8	1	0	2	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	1	0	0
14	1	0	3	0	0
18	1	0	3	0	0
Total (%)[3]	100	100	100	100	100

Question 6: Approximately how often have you been to Lake O'Hara, not including this trip?

Over one-half of all surveyed visitors had been to Lake O'Hara before: 41 percent had never been before, 17 percent had been once, and 23 percent from two to five times prior to this visit. Ten percent had been to Lake O'Hara from six to ten times, while nine percent had been to Lake O'Hara more than 10 times.

Day users fit very closely to the overall profile of past visits. Campers were less likely to have been to Lake O'Hara as often: more campers had never been to Lake O'Hara before (50%), or only once (27%), and fewer campers had been to Lake

[3] Rounding may result in percentages not totalling 100 percent.

O'Hara more than once before. Lodge guests were most likely to have been to Lake O'Hara before, often many times (23% had been to Lake O'Hara six to ten times, and 21% more than 10 times.) ACC visitors fit into two categories: 47 percent had never been to Lake O'Hara before, while 34 percent had been to Lake O'Hara from two to five times. Most walk-in visitors had been to Lake O'Hara once before (73%).

Table 2.2.2 Times to Lake O'Hara
percent; n = 415, walk-in n = 22

# of Times	Total	Day	Camper	Lodge	ACC	Walk-in
0	41	47	50	17	47	0
1	17	17	27	11	6	73
2 - 5	23	21	17	27	34	9
6 - 10	10	9	2	23	6	14
11 - 15	5	3	1	13	4	0
16 - 20	2	2	3	2	0	5
> 20	2	1	0	6	2	0
Total(%)[4]	100	100	100	100	100	100

Question 25: How many people are in your group?

The average group size was 3.7. The largest group was 22 people, staying at the ACC hut. Seven respondents said they were in a group of more than 10 people. Of these, two were day users who said they were in a group of 12. Five ACC respondents indicated they were in large groups, of 12, 20 and 22.

There have been complaints about large groups hiking together. From this data, it would appear that the large groups are coming from the Alpine Club. Group size for campers and ACC visitors is restricted to 10 people; it appears this restriction is not being adhered to by some ACC visitors.

Table 2.2.3 Group Size
n = 421, walk-in n = 23)

	total	day	camper	lodge	ACC	walk-in
Mean[5]	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.2	6.3	3.6
Mode	2	2	2	2	2	2
Maximum	22	12	10	10	22	9

[4] Rounding may result in percentages not totalling 100 percent.

[5] Mean is the average group size; Mode is the most frequent response; and Maximum is the largest group.

Question 26: Please indicate the term that best describes your group.

Table 2.2.4 presents the types of groups visitors were with. One-half of all surveyed visitors were with their family. Another 23 percent came with friends, and 19 percent with family and friends.

Day users were very similar to the overall profile. Day users had the highest percentage of all the visitor types of people on their own (8%). As with all visitors, one-half of campers were with family, but another 32 percent were with friends, compared to 16 percent with family and friends.

Lodge guests were most likely to be with family (57%) or family and friends (22%). Fourteen percent were with friends. ACC visitors were most likely to be with family and friends (31%), followed by friends (27%), and family (22%). ACC visitors had the highest percentage of organized groups (12%).

Walk-in visitors were with family (36%), friends (36%), or family and friends (18%). Nine percent were with an organized group.

Table 2.2.4 Group Type
percent; n = 424, walk-in n = 22

	total	day	camper	lodge	ACC	Walk-in
family	49	51	49	57	22	36
friends	23	22	32	14	27	36
family and friends	19	15	16	22	31	18
alone	6	8	3	6	2	0
organized group	3	2	0	1	12	9
other	1	1	0	0	6	0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Question 27: What activities were you doing on your "survey day"?

Most respondents (86%) hiked on their survey day, ranging from 78 percent for walk-ins, to 90 percent for campers. Almost one-half of respondents viewed nature (45%) - from 31 percent of ACC visitors to 49 percent of day users. About one-third of visitors walked: this was consistent for all visitor groups except ACC visitors, of which only 14 percent walked. Ten percent of all visitors climbed, while 29 percent of ACC visitors climbed.

Examining differences between visitor groups, day users undertake the greatest number of different activities, overall. More day users hike, view nature, and walk than do other groups. This pattern is logical; day users are more likely to be active on their survey day, as they are only at Lake O'Hara for a single day. Overnight

visitors could be relaxing, drying out wet gear, etc. on their survey day, having been very active earlier in their visit. In addition, climbers and hikers may only participate in that single activity during the day.

The other major difference between visitor groups is with the ACC visitors. Fewer ACC respondents viewed nature or walked, and far more climbed, than did other respondents. It is interesting to note that while 29 percent of ACC respondents climbed on their survey day, 84 percent hiked.

Table 2.2.5 Respondent Activities[6]
Percent of All Respondents

	total #	total %	day %	camper %	lodge %	ACC %	Walk-in %
n =	805		185	99	96	49	23
hike	374	86	90	86	83	84	78
view	195	45	49	43	46	31	43
walk	134	31	35	30	33	14	22
climb	42	10	6	7	8	29	4
photo	27	6	8	7	5	2	0
fish	16	4	3	3	4	6	0
paint	6	1	2	1	1	0	0
other	11	3	1	2	6	2	0

Question 29: Over the past 12 months, how many times have you participated in an outdoor recreation activity in a backcountry setting that has been more than one km away from the road?

The average number of day trips by survey respondents was 15.1 trips in the last year (See Table 2.2.6). Variation between visitor groups ranged from 11.6 for campers, to 30.3 for ACC visitors. The average number of overnight trips was 3.8, with a range from 2.2 for day users, to 9.0 for ACC visitors. The average number of trips lasting more than one night was 2.5, with a range from 1.3 for day users to 4.9 for ACC visitors.

Comparing the average number of trips for each visitor type, the ranking was the same for overnight trips and longer: day visitors made the least number of trips, then lodge, walk-in, camper, and ACC visitors. The ranking for day trips differed slightly, with campers making the least number, then day visitors, walk-ins, lodge guests, and ACC visitors. For all three lengths of trips, the average number of trips was highest for ACC visitors.

[6] Percentages total more than 100% as respondents could do more than one activity in a day.

Table 2.2.6 Number of Outdoor Activities

1. Day Trips
n = 329, walk-in n = 23

	mean[7]	mode	max
Day	12.1	10	60
Camper	11.6	1	50
Lodge	15.5	-	100
ACC	30.3	-	300
Total	**15.1**	**10**	**300**
Walk-in	14.6	-	65

2. Overnight
n = 182, walk-in n = 23

	mean	mode	max
Day	2.2	1	15
Camper	3.7	2	15
Lodge	2.4	2	13
ACC	9.0	1	90
Total	**3.8**	**1**	**90**
Walk-in	2.7	2	10

3. Longer
(n = 150, Walk-in n = 23)

	mean	mode	max
Day	1.3	0	10
Camper	2.4	3	12
Lodge	1.9	1	8
ACC	4.9	1	40
Total	**2.5**	**1**	**40**
Walk-in	2.1	1	7

[7] Mean is the average group size; Mode is the most frequent response; and Max is maximum, the largest group.

Question 28: How would you rate yourself as an outdoorsperson?

Only eight percent of all visitors rated themselves only comfortable staying in a hotel, on a one to two hour stroll, or on a half day hike. Overall, 42 percent of respondents indicated they feel comfortable on a one-day hike. An additional 20 percent feel comfortable on a weekend backpacking trip, and 22 percent on a one week wilderness trip (see Table 2.2.7).

Looking at differences between visitor groups, day users and lodge guests are most similar to each other, and less experienced than the other groups: about one-half feel comfortable on a one-day hike. Almost all respondents who indicated they felt comfortable with a half-day hike or less were day users or lodge guests.

The most frequent response by campers, ACC visitors and walk-ins was comfortable on a one week wilderness trip (36%, 36% and 41%). ACC visitors were the most experienced overall, with 23 percent comfortable leading a group, one week wilderness trip (compared to 18% of walk-ins and 12% of campers).

Table 2.2.7 Rating as an Outdoorsperson
percent; n = 422, walk-in n = 22

	Total	day	campers	lodge	ACC	walk-in
staying in hotel, relaxing out-of-doors	**0**	0	1	0	0	0
taking 1 to 2 hour stroll	**2**	3	1	4	0	0
on a half-day hike	**6**	8	0	9	2	0
on one-day hike	**42**	54	21	51	23	18
on a weekend backpacking trip	**20**	17	29	19	17	23
on a one week wilderness trip	**22**	15	36	13	36	41
leading a group, one week wilderness trip	**8**	3	12	4	23	18
Total (%)[8]	**100**	100	100	100	100	100

Responses to questions about experience and number of backcountry trips were cross tabulated to see if there was a correlation between experience level and frequency of backcountry trips. Generally, the higher the experience level, the more trips respondents had been on (see Table 2.2.8).

[8] Rounding may result in percentages not totalling 100 percent.

Table 2.2.8 Experience level compared with number of backcountry trips
Cross Tab 28 x 29

	day		overnight		longer	
	mean	#	mean	#	mean	#
stroll[9]	4.6	5	-	-	-	-
half-day	6	18	2.7	3	1	3
one day	12.9	139	2.4	58	1.6	36
weekend	12.0	63	2.6	45	1.4	27
week	16.2	70	3.9	47	2.4	56
leading	37.4	30	9.2	26	5.6	26
total	15.1	329	3.8	182	2.5	150

Question 30: Please indicate your place of residence.

Almost one-half of all visitors (47%) were from Alberta, with 20 percent from the USA and 13 percent from B.C. Day users are mainly from Alberta (48%), the USA (18%), and Ontario (10%). Campers are predominantly from Alberta (51%), the USA (19%) and B.C. (10%). Lodge guests are from Alberta (47%), the USA (32%) and B.C. (14%). ACC visitors are from B.C. (40%), and Alberta (38%). Walk-ins are from B.C. (36%), the USA (27%), Alberta (18%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (18%) (see Table 2.2.9).

Table 2.2.9 Place of Residence
n = 421, walk-in n = 22

	total #	total %	day%	camper%	lodge%	ACC%	Walk-in%
Alberta	198	47	48	51	47	38	18
B.C.	54	13	7	10	14	40	36
Sask/Man	16	4	7	2	2	0	18
Ontario	30	7	10	4	5	4	0
Quebec	11	3	3	6	0	0	0
USA	84	20	18	19	32	6	27
UK	12	3	5	0	0	8	0
Continental Europe	12	3	3	5	0	4	0
Australia	4	1	1	3	0	0	0
Total	421	100	100	100	100	100	100

[9] Only 1 respondent indicated an experience level of comfortable staying in a hotel, so this category is excluded from all cross tabs of experience level.

Lake O'Hara lodge management compiled data on the place of residence of lodge guests, by group and by guest-nights (see Table 2.2.10). While the number of surveyed lodge guests was too low to provide statistical validity, there is a close correspondence between actual place of residence and survey results.

Table 2.2.10 Residence of Lodge Guests

	Actual visitation		surveyed
	families	guest nights	respondents
Alberta	46	30	47
U.S.	25	35	32
B.C.	12	14	14
Ontario	7.5	9	5
non-North America	6	8	0
Other Canadian	3.5	4	2

Question 31: In what age group are you?

Almost 40 percent of all respondents are from 35 to 49 years of age, with 22 percent from 25 to 34, and 29 percent 50 and older. Examining the differences between visitor groups, day users are very similar to the overall age profile. Campers are younger, with 76 percent 25 to 49 years old, and only nine percent 50 and older. Lodge guests are considerably older, with only five percent 25 to 34 years old, 34 percent 35 to 49, and 52 percent 50 and older. ACC visitors are similar to day users, except for many more 12 to 17 year olds (13 percent compared to six percent overall). Walk-ins are the youngest group overall, with 86 percent 18 to 49 years old.

Table 2.2.11[10] Age of Respondent
percent

	Total	Day	Camper	Lodge	ACC	Walk-in
n =	414	172	98	23	47	22
12 - 17	6	5	6	6	13	5
18 - 24	5	3	9	2	6	14
25 - 34	22	26	31	5	22	36
35 - 49	39	40	45	34	36	36
50 - 64	18	20	5	28	17	5
65+	11	8	4	24	6	5
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

[10] Note that Table 2.2.11 presents the ages of respondents, not of all visitors to O'Hara. Visitors under 12 years of age were excluded from the survey population.

Question 32: Are you male or female?

The division between male and female visitors is equal overall, reflecting the general population distribution (see Table 2.2.12). There are a few more female than male lodge guests (54% female/46%male), and a few more male than female campers (54% male/46% female). The ratio for ACC and walk-in visitors is twice as many men as women (62 and 67% male).

Table 2.2.12 Gender of Respondent
percent; n = 409, walk-in n = 23

	female	male
Total	49	51
Day	51	49
Camper	46	54
Lodge	54	46
ACC	38	62
Walk-in	33	67

2.3 Reasons for Visiting Lake O'Hara

Respondents were asked what reasons were important to them for visiting Lake O'Hara, and why they chose Lake O'Hara.

Question 8: The following is a list of reasons why people participate in leisure activities. Please indicate the importance of each reason to you, for this visit.

Table 2.3.1 ranks the reasons for coming to Lake O'Hara by the percent of all visitors who rated them very important. Enjoying the setting is the single most important reason (ranked very important by 83% of respondents), followed by a grouping of four: observe nature, exercise, backcountry experience and time with family (each rated very important by 43 to 44 percent of respondents), followed by privacy (33%), relieving stress (28%), challenge (25%), new skills (8%) and to meet people (5%).

Table 2.3.1 Reasons for Leisure Activities
Percent

	very important		somewhat important		not important	total	
	1	2	3	4	5	%	n
enjoy setting	83	14	2	0	0	100	428
observe nature	44	36	15	2	3	100	422
exercise	44	35	16	3	2	100	423
backcountry experience	43	29	16	7	6	100	415
time with family	43	26	18	6	7	100	418
privacy or solitude	33	29	29	4	5	100	420
stress	28	25	25	10	10	100	413
challenge	25	32	24	10	7	100	417
new skills	8	21	26	22	23	100	410
meet people	5	8	26	24	37	100	416

Comparing the importance of each reason, by visitor group (Table 2.3.2), enjoying the setting is most important for each visitor group, and learning new skills and meeting people are consistently least important. The most important reasons for day users are enjoying the setting, observing nature, and spending time with their families. For campers, the most important reasons are enjoying the setting, having a backcountry experience, and exercise. For lodge guests, the most important reasons are enjoying the setting, exercise, and spending time with their families, while the most important reasons for ACC visitors are enjoying the setting, exercise, and having a backcountry experience. The most important reasons for walk-in visitors are enjoying the setting, having a backcountry experience, exercise and privacy. Several reasons were significantly more important for walk-ins than for other groups: backcountry experience, privacy, and challenge.

Table 2.3.2 Reasons for Leisure Activities, by Visitor Type
Ranking of Percent Very Important

	day	camper	lodge	ACC	walk-in
enjoy setting	86	82	83	79	73
observe nature	52	38	37	32	50
exercise	41	43	51	40	52
backcountry experience	36	57	42	40	70
time with family	45	40	45	38	41
privacy or solitude	34	24	42	29	52
stress	31	27	30	22	24
challenge	22	31	17	38	45
new skills	7	9	5	16	21
meet people	5	1	6	7	10

Question 7: Why did you choose Lake O'Hara for this trip over other locations?

The three most common reasons given for choosing Lake O'Hara were that it was beautiful, there was good hiking and climbing, and respondents had heard about it from friends.

Table 2.3.3 Why Choose Lake O'Hara

Bus-In Comments

#	%	Comment
112	22	beautiful/scenery
105	21	heard from friends
103	20	good hiking/climbing/trails
34	7	been before/favorite
33	6	solitude/peacefulness
27	5	Lodge - staff, food, accommodation
26	5	read about it
25	5	someone else decided
47	9	other - various comments, less than 5 each
512	100	

Walk-in Comments

#	%	Comment
7	29	beautiful/scenery
5	21	heard from friends
4	17	good hiking/climbing/trails
4	17	read about it
3	12	someone else decided
1	4	other - various comments, less than 5 each
24	100	

2.4 Expectations

Question 9: Did the area meet your expectations in terms of the number of people, the amount of development of trails and accommodation, overall experience, style of development of trails and accommodation?

Each aspect of Question 9 is discussed, followed by a series of tables presenting data on responses to the question, including a breakdown by visitor group, and comparison with satisfaction. Note that Question 9 asks about expectations of Lake O'Hara, not about preferences.

Overall Experience: The overall experience of visitors was better than they had expected, for between one-half and two-thirds of each visitor group.

Number of People: The number of people encountered was "as expected" for respondents generally, and for each visitor group. However, Lodge and ACC guests were more likely to encounter more people than they had expected.

Amount of Trail Development: 47 percent of respondents felt the amount of trail development was as they had expected, and 50 percent felt it was more than expected. This was consistent with each visitor group except walk-ins (70% said more than expected). Respondent expectations, when compared with satisfaction with trail conditions, showed a direct correlation; people whose expectations of the amount of trail development were exceeded were most satisfied with trail conditions.

Style of Development of Trails: 52 percent of respondents found the style of trail development to be as they expected, nine percent more primitive, and 38 percent more developed. Expectations of style of trail development were compared with satisfaction with trail conditions; people who found the trails more developed than they expected were also most satisfied with trail conditions.

Amount of Development of Accommodation: Two-thirds of respondents found the amount of development of accommodation as they expected, and one-third more than expected. This was also true for each visitor group except walk-ins (43 percent as expected and 48 percent more than expected). Expectations were compared with satisfaction with accommodation; people who found the amount of development of accommodation to be more than expected were also more satisfied.

Style of Development of Accommodation: 65 percent of respondents found the style of development of accommodation to be as they expected, 26 percent more developed, and 10 percent more primitive. When compared with satisfaction, two patterns emerged. Overall, there was a direct correlation between respondents who found there was more development than they expected, and increased satisfaction with accommodation. However, there was a subgroup of people who were more satisfied when the style of accommodation was more primitive than expected.

Expectations were compared with the number of previous visits to Lake O'Hara. Generally, all of the factors analyzed were "more than expected" and "more developed" for first time visitors, and increasingly "as expected" with repeat visits.

Table 2.4.1 Expectations
percent

	more than expected		as expected	less than expected		
	1	2	3	4	5	n
# people	12	11	55	14	8	430
amount of development of trials	23	27	47	2	1	427
amount of development of accommodation	14	17	64	3	1	409
overall experience	25	36	36	2	1	421

	more primitive		as expected	more developed		
	1	2	3	4	5	n
style of development of trails	2	7	52	22	16	417
style of development of accommodation	4	6	65	15	11	381

Table 2.4.2 Expectation by Visitor Type
percent; cross tab 9 x 5

1. Number of people

	more than expected		as expected	less than expected		
	1	2	3	4	5	n
day	9	11	54	16	9	193
camper	10	14	51	16	9	99
lodge	16	12	58	9	5	96
ACC	20	8	59	8	4	49
total	**12**	**11**	**55**	**14**	**8**	**430**
walk-in	14	9	55	5	18	22

2. Amount of Trail Development

	more than expected		as expected	less than expected		
	1	2	3	4	5	n
day	23	28	45	2	2	180
camper	21	26	49	3	0	99
lodge	22	31	47	0	0	96
ACC	29	20	45	4	2	49
total	**23**	**27**	**47**	**2**	**1**	**427**
walk-in	44	26	17	9	4	23

3. Amount of Accommodation Development

	more than expected 1	2	3	4	less than expected 5	n
day	13	15	66	4	2	167
camper	17	23	55	4	0	98
lodge	14	16	69	1	0	95
ACC	17	15	62	4	2	47
total	**14**	**17**	**64**	**3**	**1**	**409**
walk-in	24	24	43	5	5	21

4. Overall Experience

	more than expected 1	2	3	4	less than expected 5	n
day	32	37	28	1	2	177
camper	20	42	35	2	0	99
lodge	19	32	47	2	0	96
ACC	27	27	40	4	2	48
total	**25**	**36**	**36**	**2**	**1**	**421**
walk-in	27	36	32	5	0	22

5. Style of Development of Trails

	more primitive 1	2	3	4	more developed 5	n
day	2	7	55	20	15	175
camper	2	8	50	25	14	98
lodge	0	6	47	26	20	93
ACC	8	6	52	17	17	48
total	**2**	**7**	**52**	**22**	**16**	**417**
walk-in	4	4	39	30	22	23

6. Style of Development of Accommodation

	more primitive 1	2	3	4	more developed 5	n
day	4	8	69	10	10	147
camper	1	5	57	23	14	97
lodge	3	2	68	14	12	90
ACC	9	4	62	16	9	45
total	**4**	**6**	**65**	**15**	**11**	**381**
walk-in	9	9	48	30	4	23

Table 2.4.3 Satisfaction compared with Expectations
percent; cross tab 11 x 9

1. Amount development of trails compared with satisfaction with trail conditions

	more than expected		as expected		less than expected	
	1	2	3	4	5	total
1 very satisfied	71	54	52	22	33	56
2	16	31	29	11	0	26
3	16	31	29	11	0	26
4	6	14	16	67	33	4
5 very dissatisfied	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

2. Style of development of trails compared with satisfaction with trail conditions

	more primitive		as expected		more developed	
	1	2	3	4	5	total
1 very satisfied	30	43	54	56	71	56
2	10	40	29	24	15	26
3	30	13	14	16	12	14
4	20	3	4	3	2	4
5 very dissatisfied	10	0	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

3. Amount of development of accommodation compared with satisfaction with accommodation

	more than expected		as expected		less than expected	
	1	2	3	4	5	total
1 very satisfied	67	55	52	20	6	53
2	26	27	29	30	0	28
3	7	18	16	40	50	16
4	0	0	3	10	50	3
5 very dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

4. Style of development of accommodation compared with satisfaction with accommodation

	more primitive		as expected		more developed	
	1	2	3	4	5	total
1 very satisfied	43	23	55	46	71	54
2	14	54	27	39	16	28
3	43	8	15	15	13	15
4	0	15	3	0	0	3
5 very dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Question 10: Do you have any comments about your expectations and your experience at Lake O'Hara?

When asked to comment about their expectations and experiences at Lake O'Hara, over one-half of respondents commented favorably, about the beauty of the area, and the good trails and facilities. Ten percent of both bus-in and walk-in respondents asked that Lake O'Hara be kept as it is now, with no more development and no more people.

Table 2.4.4 Comments about Expectations and Experiences

bus-in		walk-in		
#	%	#	%	Comment
103	39	1	5	beautiful, great experience, more than expected
42	15	6	32	trails/facilities good, well maintained
26	10	2	10	no more development/people/keep as is
16	6	2	10	trails over developed
15	6	1	5	too expensive, wealthy playground (lodge, bus)
13	5	0	0	Lodge good
7	3	1	5	rude bus, Lodge staff
39	15	6	32	other - less than 5 each (1 each for walk ins)
261	100	19	100	

2.5 Satisfaction

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with Lake O'Hara, whether there was anything that lessened their enjoyment, and whether they would come back if they had the opportunity.

Question 13: Please indicate your overall satisfaction with your visit to Lake O'Hara on your "survey day".

Respondents were very satisfied with their visit to Lake O'Hara. Only two people were very dissatisfied (5) and no one dissatisfied (4). Walk-in visitors were not as overwhelmingly satisfied as bus-ins (see Table 2.5.1).

Satisfaction decreases with increasing experience; the least experienced visitors were the most satisfied (Table 2.5.2).

Satisfaction is highest for visitors who had been to Lake O'Hara six to ten times before, and decreases for visitors who have been less often and more often (see Table 2.5.3).

Question 13 (satisfaction) was also compared with question 18 (satisfaction given the number of people encountered). "Overall satisfaction" was higher than "satisfaction given the number of people encountered", but the differences were not great.

Table 2.5.1 Overall Satisfaction
n = 421, walk-in n = 19)

	bus-in %	walk-in %
1 - very satisfied	75	59
2 - satisfied	20	14
3 - acceptable	5	23
4 - dissatisfied	0	0
5 - very dissatisfied	0	5

Table 2.5.2 Overall satisfaction compared with experience level
percent; cross tab 13 x 28

	very satisfied		acceptable		very dissatisfied
	1	2	3	4	5
stroll	90	0	10	0	0
half-day	78	13	9	0	0
one-day	80	17	3	0	0
weekend	72	22	6	0	6
week	67	24	8	0	1
leading	66	31	3	0	0
total	74	20	5	0	0

Table 2.5.3 Satisfaction compared with number of previous visits
percent; cross tab 13 x 6

	very satisfied		acceptable		very dissatisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5	n
0	72	23	5	0	1	165
1	71	17	12	0	0	66
2-5	78	19	2	0	0	66
6-10	90	10	0	0	0	40
11-15	83	17	0	0	0	18
16-20	75	25	0	0	0	8
21-25	50	50	0	0	0	4
26+	75	25	0	0	0	4
total	75	20	5	0	0	398

Question 14: Was your enjoyment lessened by weather or equipment.

Weather lessened enjoyment for 31 percent of all visitors: 46 percent of campers, 41 percent of lodge guests, 27 percent of ACC visitors, and 18 percent of day users. This difference could be caused by some day users deciding not to come at all if the weather was bad. Other comments about factors lessening enjoyment included rain and the bus schedule.

Table 2.5.4 Lessened Enjoyment
percent

	Bus-in			Walk-in		
	Yes	No	n	Yes	No	n
Weather	31	69	399	32	68	19
Problems with equipment	3	97	369	0	100	16
Other	16	84	160	50	50	12

Question 33: If you had the opportunity, would you come back to Lake O'Hara?

When asked if they would come back to Lake O'Hara, all but two respondents indicated they would.

Table 2.5.5 Come Again?
actual numbers

	yes	no	n
bus-in	419	1	420
walk-in	19	1	20

Question 34: Do you have any comments or suggestions concerning Lake O'Hara?

Day users' most frequent comments were: it's wonderful, leave as is, specific suggestions, protect it. Campers commented: leave as is, it's wonderful, protect it, well managed. Lodge guests said: protect it, it's wonderful, leave as is. ACC visitors said: specific suggestions, leave as is; protect it, other. Walk-in comments were: it's wonderful, leave as is, and shouldn't be a commercial operation in the Park. Specific comments were made by many individuals and can be found in Chapter 5.

Table 2.5.6 Comments and Suggestions about Lake O'Hara
n = 260 comments, made by 213 respondents

#	%	Comment
57	22	leave as is
59	23	it's wonderful
21	8	protect it
46	18	specific suggestions
8	3	well managed
48	18	playground for wealthy
21	8	other
260	100	

3. Management Techniques

3.1 Introduction

In order to minimize negative impacts of visitor use on the environment and the recreation experience, Park Managers are seeking ways to optimally control and manage visitation to the Lake O'Hara area, in addition to providing appropriate facilities and services.

The second objective of the visitor survey is:

> To determine user views and preferences towards present and alternate visitor management techniques that may be appropriate for the Lake O'Hara area.

Satisfaction with management regime	• Overall satisfaction with present visitor levels • Influence of various management techniques on visitor's experience • Level of visitor satisfaction with park services
Preferences for various management techniques	• Preferred means of limiting entry • Preferred means of controlling use • Preferred means of dispersing visitor use • Preference regarding change in number of visitors

3.2 Satisfaction with Management Regime

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their satisfaction with the current management of Lake O'Hara, including the bus reservation system, welcome and orientation, trails, and accommodation.

Question 3: How satisfied are you with: bus reservation system; welcome, orientation on bus; and bus schedule?

Satisfaction with the bus reservation system ranged from acceptable to very satisfied. Only eight percent of all respondents were dissatisfied. Comparing the number of respondents satisfied or very satisfied, Lodge guests were the most satisfied (85% satisfied or very satisfied), followed by campers (74%), ACC (67%) and day users (65%) (Table 3.2.1).

Satisfaction with the welcome and orientation on the bus was similar to that for the bus reservation system, ranging from acceptable to very satisfied, with the most frequent response by each visitor group "very satisfied". Comparing the number of respondents satisfied or very satisfied, day users were the most satisfied (77% satisfied or very satisfied), followed by campers (74%), Lodge guests (73%) and ACC (69%).

Satisfaction with the bus schedule was somewhat lower than for the first two questions. Responses ranged from acceptable to very satisfied, with the most frequent response for each visitor group "very satisfied", but there were more respondents who were dissatisfied, or found the schedule "acceptable" than for the first two questions (13% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, compared to 8% for the reservation system, and 7% for the welcome and orientation). Comparing the number of respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied, Lodge guests were most satisfied (79% satisfied or very satisfied), followed by day users (66%), campers (65%) and ACC visitors (56%).

Overall, satisfaction with the bus reservation system, orientation and schedule was high, with slightly less satisfaction for the bus schedule. However, it is important to remember that these respondents are those that were able to get a bus reservation. Satisfaction with the reservation system can be expected to be much lower with people who were unable to get a reservation.

Comparing visitor groups, Lodge guests were most satisfied with both the reservation system and the bus schedule, while day users were most satisfied with the orientation. ACC visitors were consistently less satisfied than the other visitor groups.

Table 3.2.1 Satisfaction with Bus

1. Reservation

percent, n = 418

	very satisfied 1	2	3	4	very dissatisfied 5	total
day	48	17	24	8	4	100
camper	52	22	23	2	1	100
lodge	74	11	12	2	1	100
ACC	39	28	20	7	7	100
total	54	18	21	5	3	100

2. Welcome

percent, n = 415

	very satisfied 1	2	3	4	very dissatisfied 5	total
day	51	26	18	4	1	100
camper	53	21	18	5	2	100
lodge	62	11	15	7	5	100
ACC	43	26	21	9	2	100
total	53	21	18	5	2	100

3. Schedule

percent, n = 410

	very satisfied 1	2	3	4	very dissatisfied 5	total
day	43	23	18	10	6	100
camper	38	27	21	10	4	100
lodge	63	16	15	5	0	100
ACC	35	21	33	6	4	100
total	45	22	20	9	4	100

Question 4: Did you have any difficulty making bus or accommodation reservations for this trip?

Eighty percent of all respondents had no difficulty making bus or accommodation reservations (Table 3.2.2). This varies by visitor group, from a high of 94 percent of lodge guests to a low of 70 percent of day users. It is important to remember that these are people who were successful at making a reservation: 20 percent of the people surveyed who were ultimately successful at getting a reservation had some difficulties getting that reservation.

Table 3.2.2 Difficulty Making a Reservation
n = 412

	yes	no
day	30	70
camper	20	80
lodge	6	94
ACC	11	89
total	20	80

Table 3.2.3 presents a breakdown of respondents who had difficulty getting a reservation, by residence and visitor group. Difficulty making a reservation appears to depend more on the visitor group than the place of residence.

Day users face the most competition for reservations; data collected on the number of requests for reservations shows that almost twice as many individuals are turned down per day as are granted a reservation (as discussed in 1.3 Methodology). For campers, the refusal rate is over 25 percent of capacity. (Note that the data for day users is per person, while the data for campers is per camp site).

Examining Table 3.2.3 for each subgroup with 20 percent or more members having difficulty making a reservation, almost all day visitor subgroups had difficulty, as did many of the camper subgroups, compared to one ACC subgroup, and no lodge subgroups.

It has been theorized by CPS staff that visitors from far away would have more difficulty getting reservations. Subgroups with 20 percent or more of their respondents noting problems getting a reservation are listed here. The most problems were experienced by day users from the UK; 60 percent of this group had difficulty getting a reservation.

Day - UK (60%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (45%), continental Europe (40%), Alberta (33%), USA (30%), and Quebec (20%)
Camper - Continental Europe (50%), Australia (33%), Ontario (25%), and Alberta (22%)
Lodge - none
ACC - visitors from Alberta (22%)

Note: the sample size for Australia and the UK are less than 10, so need to be treated with caution.

There appears to be some link between difficulty making a reservation and place of residence: visitors from Europe and the UK have the greatest difficulties. However, drawing conclusions about the other groups is difficult because of the inconsistency in the pattern. Visitors from B.C. rarely have problems, but those from Alberta have more problems than those from the USA.

Table 3.2.3 Residence Compared with Difficulty Making Reservation
Cross tab 30 x 4; n = 412, based on percent yes

	day	camper	lodge	ACC	total (%)	n
BC	18	0	8	6	8	51
Ont.	19	25	0	0	14	28
USA	30	17	3	0	16	81
Quebec	20	17	-	-	18	11
Alberta	33	22	9	22	24	194
Australia	0	33	-	-	25	4
Sask/Man	45	0	0	-	33	15
Cont. Europe	40	50	-	0	36	11
UK	60	-	-	0	43	7
						402

Question 4: Comments about Difficulty Getting a Reservation

Table 3.2.4 presents the comments made about difficulty getting a reservation. These comments highlight some of the problems - having to book far in advance, the bus schedule, and Park staff errors in booking.

Table 3.2.4 Difficulty getting a Reservation - Comments

#	%	Comments
20	20	no - made well in advance
20	20	yes - too limited, or too long lead time
20	20	couldn't get/hard to get a reservation
8	8	need later bus
5	5	Parks staff made errors in booking
29	28	other (various comments, each by less than 5 people)
102	100%	

Question 11: How satisfied were you with the following factors, during your "survey day"?

Table 3.2.5 presents satisfaction level with seven factors, relating to the trails, facilities, information and staff at Lake O'Hara. The majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied for each factor except interpretive services, and the most frequent response for each factor was very satisfied, except interpretive services, which was acceptable. The factors are ranked in Table 3.2.4 by the percent very satisfied: the variety of trails was rated most positively, and interpretive services least positively. The day use shelter opened August 1, so there was some confusion

early in the season between the day use shelter and the cook shelters in the campground.

Table 3.2.5 Satisfaction

	very satisfied		acceptable		very dissatisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5	n
variety of trails	66	24	8	1	1	417
trail conditions	56	26	14	4	0	424
day use shelter	55	31	18	6	3	199
accommodation	52	29	17	3	0	254
trail information	46	29	18	6	1	423
parks staff	40	22	28	8	2	378
interpretive services	19	22	38	15	6	174

Table 3.2.6 compares the percent very satisfied for each factor, for each visitor group. Overall, lodge guests were most satisfied, and ACC visitors were least satisfied. Examining each visitor group:

Day Use: most satisfied with variety of trails, trail conditions
least satisfied with interpretive services, accommodation
(irrelevant as did not use any accommodation)

Campers: most satisfied with variety of trails, trail conditions
least satisfied with interpretive services, day use shelter
(there is confusion between campground shelters and the day use shelter, as the day use shelter did not open until Aug. 1.)

Lodge: most satisfied with accommodation, variety of trails
least satisfied with interpretive services, parks staff

ACC: most satisfied with variety of trails, trail conditions
least satisfied with interpretive services, parks staff

Walk-in most satisfied with variety of trails, trail conditions
least satisfied with interpretive services, parks staff

Table 3.2.6 Satisfaction, by Visitor Group
Based on Percent Very Satisfied

	day	camper	lodge	ACC	walk-in
variety of trails	67	61	78	51	73
trail conditions	59	54	53	49	64
day use shelter	51	31	69	32	50
accommodation	37	41	79	38	42
trail information	41	42	57	43	36
parks staff	44	42	36	31	30
interpretive services	21	20	17	14	0

Question 11: Comments

When asked for specific comments about these factors, respondents discussed specific trail and campground problems, and suggested improvements to the maps and signs. Staff were both criticized and praised, and trail maintenance was commended.

Table 3.2.7 Comments about Satisfaction

#	%	Comments
33	22	trail problems
26	18	problems with campground, toilets, water
23	16	update, improve maps
13	9	problems with staff
12	8	staff good
10	7	trails in good shape
9	6	problems/suggestions regarding signs
21	14	other (various comments, less than 5 each)
147	100%	

Question 12: What is your opinion of the level of trail development?

Respondents were asked their opinion of the level of trail development. Overall, 70 percent felt the level was acceptable, while four percent said the trails were not developed enough, and 26 percent felt they were too developed. Responses from each visitor group were very consistent with this overall response.

Table 3.2.8 Level of Trail Development
percent; n = 423, walk-in n = 22

	too developed		acceptable		not developed enough	
	1	2	3	4	5	total
day	6	20	70	2	2	100
camper	4	26	67	3	0	100
lodge	5	18	70	6	0	100
ACC	6	21	69	2	2	100
Total	**5**	**21**	**70**	**3**	**1**	**100**
walk-in	9	18	73	0	0	100

Question 12: Comments

When asked for specific comments about the level of trail development, the majority of responses were that the trails were well developed. Others commented that the trails were over developed, or discussed specific trail problems. These specific comments are presented in Chapter 5.

Table 3.2.9 Comments about Level of Trail Development

bus-in		walk-in		
#	%	#	%	Comments
148	59	8	50	trails are well developed
47	19	5	31	trails are over developed
28	11	1	6	specific trail problems
28	11	2	13	other (various comments, each by less than 5 people)
251	100	16	100	

Table 4.2.2 compares level of trail development with hiking destination.

3.3 Preferences for Various Management Techniques

Respondents were asked their opinion of the current day use quota, then a series of questions about various management techniques.

Question 21: Do you think the number of day visitors allowed into Lake O'Hara should increase, stay the same or decrease?

The majority of respondents favored leaving the quota as it is (see Table 3.3.1). There is very little support for decreasing the number of day users, while some support was expressed for an increase. However, walk-in visitors differ on this, with some support for a decrease, and very little support for an increase. Campers feel strongest about keeping the day use quota as is, while day users are more likely to support an increase than the other users, excluding ACC respondents. The ACC response is the least consistent - more respondents supported an increase, and more respondents supported a decrease.

Table 3.3.1 Day Use Quota
percent; n = 414

	increase	stay the same	decrease
day	22	74	4
camper	5	90	4
lodge	14	81	5
ACC	23	67	10
Total	**16**	**79**	**5**
Walk-in	5	68	26

Respondents were asked to comment on the number of day users (see Table 3.3.2). Comments ranged from leave the quota as it is, increase it slightly, or decrease it. Other comments included concerns about the environment and misuse of the area, and requests to "protect the wilderness feel" of the area.

Table 3.3.2 Comments about Day Use Quota

#	%	Comments
79	29	leave as is
66	25	small increase
26	10	concerns with environment
26	10	concerns with misuse
25	9	protect wilderness feel
17	6	decrease
30	11	other
269	100%	

Walk-in comments

#	%	comment
7	43	leave as is
4	25	decrease
2	13	concerns with environment
3	19	other - 1 comment each
16	100	

Question 22: What are your preferences for methods to control the number of people allowed into the area (for overnight or day use)?

There is strong support for reserving an entry permit, and opposition to the other options. There is some support for saving some spaces for first come, first given entry. (The current system involves reserving an entry permit, with some spaces saved for first come, first served). Walk-in visitors responded similarly, but with less strong support for reserving an entry permit, and more support for first come, first given entry.

Table 3.3.3 Preferences for Control of Numbers of Visitors
percent

	strongly support		acceptable		strongly object	
	1	2	3	4	5	n=
Reserving an entry permit	66	19	12	2	1	408
First come, first given entry	9	8	24	23	36	350
Winning a permit	1	3	11	16	68	339
No limitations	2	1	3	10	84	344
Walk-in						
Reserving an entry permit	48	29	24	0	0	21
First come, first given entry	6	38	12	38	6	16
Winning a permit	0	0	19	12	69	16
No limitations	0	0	0	24	76	17

Support for the current system of reserving an entry permit is strong overall (66% strongly support), but varies greatly by place of residence, from 100 percent of UK visitors, to 45 percent of Quebec visitors (see Table 3.3.4).

Response to first come, first given entry was also compared with place of residence. The strongest opposition came from Australians (67% strongly object), while the weakest opposition came from the UK (20% strongly object), Continental Europe (13%), and Quebec (18%).

Table 3.3.4 Place of Residence compared to Support for Reserving an Entry permit
percent; cross tab 30 x 22:

	strongly support		acceptable		strongly object	
	1	2	3	4	5	n=
UK	100	0	0	0	0	12
USA	74	15	10	1	0	80
BC	72	15	11	0	2	53
Alberta	63	22	12	2	2	189
Sask/Man	62	19	19	0	0	16
Ontario	59	26	11	0	4	27
Continental Europe	55	18	9	18	0	11
Australia	50	25	25	0	0	4
Quebec	45	36	18	0	0	11
Total	66	19	11	2	1	403

Table 3.3.5 presents the proportion of strong support or strong opposition for the four management options, for all respondents, followed by those who had no trouble getting a reservation, then by those who did have trouble.

There is strong support for the current system, and strong opposition to the suggested alternatives, but this is more true for people who had no trouble getting a reservation, and less true for those who did have trouble. That is, people who had more trouble getting in were less supportive of the status quo.

Respondents were asked for suggestions for other management options; these are presented in Chapter 5.

Table 3.3.5 Trouble Getting a Reservation compared with Preferences
percent; cross tab 4 x 22

		trouble getting reservation	
	total	no	yes
entry permit - strongly support	65%	71	44
first come, first given entry - strongly oppose	36%	38	32
winning a permit - strongly oppose	68%	70	62
no limits - strongly oppose	84%	87	75

Question 23: What are your preferences for methods to manage visitor activities at Lake O'Hara?

There is strong support for restrictions on activities, support for use zones, objection to physical alterations, and strong objection to no management (see Table 3.3.6).

Support for these management options were compared with experience level (Question 28). Use zones received more support by less experienced people, and less support by more experienced people. For example, 67 percent of people comfortable with a stroll strongly supported use zones, compared to 45-48 percent of people comfortable on a one-day hike, or more experienced.

Physical alterations were most strongly opposed by people comfortable on a one-day hike and weekend trips, with weakest opposition by those comfortable on a stroll or leading a week long trip.

Respondents were asked for suggestions for other management options; these are presented in Section 5.5 Visitor Management (pp. 59 - 71).

Table 3.3.6 Preferences for Managing Visitor Activities
percent

	strongly support		acceptable		strongly object	
	1	2	3	4	5	n
Restrictions on types of activities allowed	80	7	8	3	3	412
"Use zones" where only certain activities are allowed	47	17	28	3	5	391
Physical alterations to discourage use	11	9	25	27	28	381
No visitor management	3	4	5	14	73	382

Question 24: What do you think about the following?

There is strong support for maps showing trail difficulty, and for a trail guide linking visitor needs and interests to the appropriate trail. There is strong opposition to one-way trail systems and staggered start times.

The pattern seems to be that respondents would like more information, to make their own, informed choices. They do not want imposed controls.

Reaction to these management strategies was compared with experience levels. Less experienced people were more supportive of maps of popular trails than those with more experience. There was also a difference in opposition to one-way trails. More experienced respondents were more strongly opposed, while some less experience people were supportive. However, overall there was clear opposition to this strategy. There was little difference in levels of support by experience level, for the other options.

Respondents were asked for suggestions for other management options; these are presented in Chapter 5.

Table 3.3.7 Trail Controls
percent

	strongly support 1	2	acceptable 3	4	strongly object 5	n
Map showing the level of trail difficulty	59	26	13	1	1	412
Trail guide to link visitor needs and interests to appropriate trail	36	25	30	3	5	403
Maps showing least and most popular trails	29	21	29	12	10	409
A "host" to suggest trail choice	19	15	42	14	10	401
One-way trail systems	3	6	17	24	50	396
Staggered trail user start times	2	3	10	26	59	395

4. Visitor Capacity

4.1 Introduction

An essential part of this study is the assessment of alternate visitor management techniques that may be appropriate for the Lake O'Hara area. The survey will help determine the preferences of Lake O'Hara users toward various management techniques.

The third objectives of the visitor survey is:

> To estimate the visitor capacity of the Lake O'Hara area, based on the perceptions of visitors (to be used in conjunction with the environmental factors). This will help define what constitutes "crowding" at Lake O'Hara.

Estimate visitor capacity	• Number of people encountered while hiking, in one day • Size of groups encountered • Opinion regarding whether the trails were crowded • Influence of day's encounters on trip satisfaction • Tolerance to numbers of people while hiking • Location of popular trails

4.2 Visitor Capacity

A series of questions were asked to help estimate the visitor capacity of Lake O'Hara. The destination of hikes was compared with visitor opinions about the level of trail development, crowding, and satisfaction given the number of people encountered. Additional questions were asked about how many people they encountered, how crowded the trails were, and satisfaction given the number of people encountered. A hypothetical question was asked about how satisfaction is affected with increasing numbers of people, and, finally, respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding their concerns about crowding.

Question 15: Please check the destination(s) of your hike(s) on your "survey day".
(Note: respondents could hike more than one trail on their survey day.)

Table 4.2.1[11] Destinations

	#	%
did not hike	2	.5
Lake O'Hara Circuit	154	36
Opabin Plateau/Lake	141	33
Lake Oesa	135	32
Schaffer Lake	82	19
Lake McArthur	73	17
Mary Lake	66	15
Odaray Plateau	58	13
Odaray/Grandview	35	8
Yukness	30	7
Morning Glory/Linda Lakes	26	6
Lake McArthur - alpine	24	6
Cathedral Lakes/Duchesnay Basin	24	6
Wiwaxy	20	5
Abbot Pass	17	4
Cathedral Basin	10	2
Odaray/Grandview - alpine	6	1
Alpine Abbot Pass	5	1
Access trail	3	1
Odaray Plateau - alpine	2	.5
Other	24	6
	927	

Walk-in	#
did not hike	1
Access trail	6
Lake O'Hara Circuit	5
Opabin Plateau/Lake	5
Schaffer Lake	5
Lake Oesa	5
Lake McArthur	4
Morning Glory/Linda Lakes	3
Odaray Plateau	2
Mary Lake	1
Odaray/Grandview	1
Other	4
Total	42

[11] See Appendix 1 for the full list of destinations provided in the survey, and a map of the area.

The majority of respondents found the level of trail development to be acceptable for each trail (see Table 4.2.2). However, there were "leanings" towards too developed for most trails. At least 20 percent of respondents felt every trail was too developed, except Odaray Plateau (18%). At least 30 percent of respondents felt the trails were too developed for three trails: Opabin Plateau/Lake (34%), Abbot Pass (30%), and Cathedral Basin (30%).

Table 4.2.2[12] Destination compared with Level of Trail Development
percent; cross tab 15 x 12

	too developed		acceptable	not developed enough		
	1	2	3	4	5	n
Lake O'Hara Circuit	3	21	74	1	0	155
Mary Lake	8	18	71	2	2	65
Opabin Plateau/Lake	8	26	63	1	1	139
Lake Oesa	8	19	67	3	2	131
Schaffer Lake	1	23	71	0	0	78
Abbot Pass	6	24	71	0	0	17
Morning Glory/Linda Lakes	8	16	64	8	4	25
Odaray Plateau	2	16	75	5	2	56
Cathedral Lakes/Duchesnay Basin	4	21	58	13	4	24
Cathedral Basin	10	20	70	0	0	10
Odaray/Grandview	3	18	76	3	0	33
Lake McArthur	5	24	64	7	0	42
Total (all destinations)	6	21	69	3	1	870

The majority of respondents felt the number of people encountered was neither too crowded nor deserted (see Table 4.2.3). Very few people found the trails too crowded; only eight percent of all respondents. The only trail felt to be too crowded by the most people was Abbot Pass (18%). However, 47 percent found Abbot Pass deserted, so it cannot be concluded that Abbot Pass is generally overcrowded.

[12] All trails hiked by fewer than 6 people were excluded. N = 870 because people could hike more than one trail on their survey day.

Table 4.2.3 Crowding on Trails compared with Destination
percent; cross tab 15 x 17

	deserted				very crowded	
	1	2	3	4	5	n =
Lake O'Hara Circuit	6	31	59	4	0	155
Mary Lake	8	29	58	6	0	66
Opabin Plateau/Lake	6	23	60	9	1	142
Lake Oesa	4	19	65	10	2	134
Schaffer Lake	9	28	52	9	2	82
Abbot Pass	6	41	35	18	0	17
Morning Glory/Linda Lakes	20	24	52	0	4	25
Odaray Plateau	9	19	64	7	2	58
Cathedral Lakes/Duchesnay Basin	25	29	46	0	0	24
Cathedral Basin	50	20	20	0	10	10
Odaray/Grandview	6	26	60	9	0	35
Lake McArthur	7	24	61	6	2	84
Total (all destinations)	7	26	58	7	1	886

Two-thirds of respondents were very satisfied overall, given the number of people they encountered. There were three destinations where the number of very satisfied respondents was more than 70 percent: Cathedral Lakes/ Duchesnay Basin (71%), Odaray/Grandview (71%), and Alpine - Odaray/Grandview (83%). There were also three destinations where the number of very satisfied respondents was less than 60%: Cathedral Basin (50%), Abbot Pass (59%), and Lake Oesa (58%).

Overall, only four percent of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This is generally true for each destination except one: 18 percent were very dissatisfied with Abbot Pass.

Table 4.2.4 Destination compared with Satisfaction given the number of people encountered
percent; cross tab 15 x 18

	very satisfied				very dissatisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5	n
Lake O'Hara Circuit	66	20	12	1	1	155
Mary Lake	62	23	10	4	1	66
Opabin Plateau/Lake	62	23	10	4	1	141
Lake Oesa	58	25	13	4	0	134
Schaffer Lake	64	16	15	5	0	81
Abbot Pass	59	18	6	0	18	17
Morning Glory/Linda Lakes	60	20	20	0	0	25
Odaray Plateau	61	19	14	4	2	57
Cathedral Lakes/Duchesnay Basin	71	17	12	0	0	24
Cathedral Basin	50	10	40	0	0	10
Odaray/Grandview	71	9	14	3	3	35
Alpine - Odaray/Grandview	83	17	0	0	0	6
Lake McArthur	64	14	17	4	1	83
Total (all destinations)	63	20	13	3	1	881

Question 16: How many sets of people (individuals or groups) did you encounter on the trails on your "survey day"? What was the average size? How many people did you encounter in total on the trails on your "survey day"?

Respondents saw an average of 7.1 groups of people, with an average group size of 2.8, and a total number of 18.7 people while hiking on their survey day (Table 4.2.5).

Table 4.2.5 Number of People Encountered
1. How many sets of people:

	bus-in	walk-in
mean (average)	7.1	8.6
mode (most frequent answer)	6	-
maximum (highest response)	30	20
n (number of responses)	408	23

2. Average size of group:

	bus-in	walk-in
mean (average)	2.8	2.4
mode (most frequent answer)	2	2
maximum (highest response)[13]	10	3
n (number of responses)	414	23

3. Total number of people:

	bus-in	walk-in
mean (average)	18.7	18.6
mode (most frequent answer)	20	-
maximum (highest response)*	60	35
n (number of responses)	399	23

Question 17: How crowded did you find the trails?

Over one-half of respondents found the number of people on the trails acceptable, and approximately one-third found the trails deserted. Only eight percent of all respondents found the trails to be crowded. Of all the visitor groups, lodge guests were most likely to find the number of people acceptable; campers most likely to find the trails deserted; and ACC and walk-ins most likely of the visitor groups to find the trails too crowded.

Table 4.2.6 Crowding of Trails
percent; n = 427, walk-in n = 21

	deserted		acceptable		very crowded
	1	2	3	4	5
day	10	26	58	5	1
camper	7	32	54	7	0
lodge	1	19	72	6	1
ACC	4	27	54	10	4
Total	**7**	**26**	**59**	**7**	**1**
walk-in	24	14	48	14	0

[13] This is not the largest group, but is the highest response to the question "what was the average size of group".

Question 18: Given the number of people you encountered, how satisfied were you with your hike?

Two-thirds of respondents were very satisfied with their hikes, given the number of people they encountered. Comparing visitor groups, there were some differences in the percentages of very satisfied or satisfied, but few differences in the numbers who felt their day was acceptable or not satisfying.

Table 4.2.7 Satisfaction Given Number of People Encountered
percent; n = 425, walk-in n = 21

	very satisfied		acceptable		very dissatisfied
	1	2	3	4	5
day	65	18	12	3	1
camper	58	24	15	2	1
lodge	67	14	17	2	0
ACC	56	23	13	2	6
Total	**63**	**19**	**14**	**3**	**1**
walk-in	48	38	14	0	0

Question 19: We want to know how the number of people encountered affect visitor satisfaction. Please indicate the number of people you could have encountered while hiking on your "survey day" and been very satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied.

Replies to this question show a consistent pattern, when averaged. People said they could see 18.6 people and still be very satisfied. This matches the actual number of people seen (see Table 4.2.5), and satisfaction levels (see Table 4.2.7). Satisfaction decreases as the number of people encountered increases, to an average of 75 people encountered resulting in great dissatisfaction.

Table 4.2.8 Hypothetical Numbers of People

	mean	mode	max	n [14]
very satisfied	18.6	10	120	359
moderately satisfied	30.4	30	200	330
moderately dissatisfied	46.8	50	300	326
very dissatisfied	75.5	100	1000	327

[14] Two respondents were excluded because their answers were very extreme, and would skew the results.

Generally, walk-in visitors would prefer the fewest number of visitors, while day users would tolerate the most (almost twice as many as walk-ins) (see Table 4.2.9).

Table 4.2.9 Hypothetical Number of People by Visitor Type
Cross tab 19 x 5

1. Very satisfied

	mean	mode	maximum
day	22.1	20	120
camper	14.6	10	100
lodge	16.7	20	75
ACC	15.0	10	100
Total	**18.3**	**10**	**120**
Walk-in	10.3	-	30

2. Satisfied

	mean	mode	maximum
day	33.8	30	200
camper	22.6	20	200
lodge	25.9	-	125
ACC	25.9	10	75
Total	**29.7**	**30**	**200**
Walk-in	18.9	-	50

3. Dissatisfied

	mean	mode	maximum
day	49.4	50	250
camper	44.6	30	300
lodge	38.3	50	175
ACC	25.9	10	75
Total	**45.2**	**50**	**300**
Walk-in	27.1	-	70

4. Very dissatisfied

	mean	mode	maximum
day	76.7	-	500
camper	64.0	40	500
lodge	57.9	100	500
ACC	64.3	100	200
Total	**67.8**	**100**	**500**
Walk-in	36.2	-	100

There is not a consistent relationship between experience level and changing satisfaction as numbers of visitors increase (see Table 4.2.10). People comfortable on a one-day hike or leading a one-week trip were the most tolerant of increasing numbers of people. People comfortable on a stroll, weekend trip or one-week trip were the least tolerant of increasing numbers.

Table 4.2.10 Hypothetical Number of People Compared with Experience Level
Mean (average); cross tab 19 x 5

	very sat	mod sat	mod dissat	very dissat
stroll	13.6	19.3	36.7	53.0
half-day	16.9	25.6	36.4	54.6
one-day	23.1	36.2	53.0	78.4
weekend	13.0	22.6	37.3	55.4
week	13.0	22.6	37.3	55.4
leading	18.7	31.9	51.6	69.9
total	18.3	29.7	45.2	67.8

Question 20: Do you have any concerns about crowding on the trails at Lake O'Hara?

Comments about crowding included discussions about how crowding diminishes the experience, and concerns about damage to the environment as a result of crowding.

Table 4.2.11 Concerns about Crowding

	#	%
no concerns now	120	35
yes - do have concerns	107	31
OK as is	49	14
environmental concerns	35	10
other	36	10
	347	100

Walk-ins	#	%
yes, limit access	10	56
no concerns now	4	22
other, one each	4	22
	18	100

5.0 Specific Suggestions and Comments

The questionnaires contained many written responses. Many of these comments were coded into categories and included in the analysis in the previous chapters. However, many of these comments are also important to reproduce in full, because they address specific problems, or make suggestions for changes. These comments represent only 10 to 20 percent of survey respondents; however, these people took time to complete these responses, so can be seen as very committed to Lake O'Hara. The comments presented in this chapter will not provide overall impressions about views of the park, but are intended to focus attention on specific problems and suggestions. The comments presented here are not representative; Chapters 2 to 4 provide the statistically valid information. This chapter can be most useful if used to focus on specific solutions to problems identified in Chapters 2 to 4.

The chapter begins with comments about trails, followed by facilities, information, parks staff, visitor management, and finally, miscellaneous comments that might be of interest. The section on visitor management includes all the suggestions for visitor management techniques made in response to Questions 22, 23 and 24.

5.1 Trails

Specific Trails

Opabin East Overdeveloped

- Over development of Opabin East trails.
- Worried about trend of trail development seen on Lake Opabin Trail.
- Startled by type of trail paving on Opabin. Hope this will not be done in other areas. Further trail improvements could be more natural.
- Trails Opabin Lake - work by non-wilderness specialist - not appropriate.
- Some overkill on Opabin East circuit.
- East Opabin trail work - turnpike - still very unnatural. There must be a better way of coping with that trail.
- Opabin especially unattractive trail in beautiful area.
- Trail management should not be intrusive (e.g, stairs on Opabin Plateau)
- Opabin too much.

Other Specific Trail Comments

- An awful lot of trails leading off Opabin.
- Place rocks in muddy trails (Cathedral Lake trail).
- Cathedral Lake trail was very boggy.
- Develop trails to join Duchesnay & Cathedral Basin on Alpine Ledge.
- Shame some trails are not maintained - Yukness.
- Few bridges on Cataract Brook trail need repair.
- Trail work required at Lake McArthur on the low circuit route.
- Improve trails at McArthur Lake/Odaray Plateau.
- Develop trail from Alpine Meadows to campgrounds mentioned in Beers O'Hara hiking book.

Amount of Development

- Greater variety of trails over main passes.
- Most trails are 'family oriented', more adventurous trailing at levels above 2500 m would be appreciated.
- Would like more moderate trails - now either easy or very strenuous.
- Sufficient choices.
- Enough trails and they are well enough developed.
- Not enough trails.
- Don't need more trails. Unused ones could be rehabilitated or the cairns knocked down (e.g., Yukness Ledge to Oesa Trail cairns which straggle off to nowhere).
- Just enough trails.
- There could be 1 or 2 more long day trips.
- Do not develop any more.
- It is just between acceptable and too developed.
- Area could contain more trails without significant environmental damage.
- Need more low trails.
- Very acceptable.
- Very good access to the area.
- No more development.
- A larger trail, maybe overpass, desirable.
- Great mixture.
- Lots of trails close together going same place. This may be best solution for handling crowds and environment protection.
- Over-developed trials.
- Do not overdevelop.

Type of Development

- Trails too short.
- Like the circuits.
- Occasionally seems overly careful of ground cover.
- Good compromise between conservation & safety.
- Would not want the trails developed as at Lake Louise or Moraine.
- Trails should be developed enough so that one does not easily get off them by mistake, but not so developed that one feels he is on interpretive trail in city park. Need to maintain feel of wilderness.
- Not experienced hiker, but felt safe and knew where we were on the trails by using map.
- Protect flowers and plants by side of trail.

Trail Conditions

- Trails in some areas should be wider.
- Trails need gravel or board walk in wet places to keep people on trail.
- Condition of trails requires some extension & consequently will prevent overcrowding and misuse.
- Mud trails - hikers in runners get out of mud and trample a new path.
- Some muddy sections.
- Some trails are deep ruts and need to be built up.
- Flagstones in muddy areas to prevent erosion and spreading of trails would be nice.
- Needs trail improvements (fill in trenches, gullies). User fee could be charged to visitors (few $/day) to help pay trail maintenance.
- Some trails require gravel or sand to help drainage and discourage usage of surrounding grass.
- Some trails require stepping stones to prevent erosion of adjacent areas.
- Put more rocks in deeply rutted trails to prevent people from having to step on grass.
- Widen trails slightly.
- Lots of rain therefore trails slippery and had to walk beside trails sometime.
- Muddy trails.
- Some trails should be wider.
- Trails were a bit narrow. Snowed and muddy. Couldn't help walking on grass.
- Some trails need better development, particularly through meadow areas where trails were often muddy and difficult.
- A few muddy places could have rocks or gravel put in.
- Trail too narrow.
- Some bridges in certain areas are in need of upgrading.

5.2 Facilities

ACC

- ACC hut biffies need cleaning.
- ACC biffies should be cleaned and upgraded.
- Outhouses at ACC hut inadequate.
- New toilet needed for men at ACC hut. Better area for personal hygiene.
- Disappointed that huts charge so much.
- Outhouses at Elizabeth Parker stink and are close to full. Parks should put some thought to installing more environmentally sensitive septic system.
- Greater ACC type accommodation would be good.

Lodge and Lodge staff

- Too bad generator was so loud.
- Get rid of lodge management.
- Commercial operation (Lodge) shouldn't be allowed in our national park.
- More flexible in hours of meal service.
- Don't expect horrible smell from sewage at Lodge's bus loading area.
- The lodge. Make it Alpine Club; it's for rich only, does not belong here.
- The Lodge is tops.
- Black pipe carrying treated sewage from Lodge emptying into the creek is outrageous. Why is there such a large commercial operation (Lodge) in National Park?
- Concerned with sewage waste. Unpleasant odor from back of lodge.
- Lodge too expensive.
- Expand lodge.
- Disappointed to learn bus fare goes to Lodge and not trail maintenance. What contribution does the lodge make to the area.
- Get hotel out of here.
- Lodge too developed, too many buildings.
- Get rid of hotel.
- Hikers should be allowed to have breakfast at Lodge. This is a National Park and Lodge should not be able to restrict access or utilization.
- As a day hiker, would like good breakfast at Lodge.
- Lodge causes problem. Necessitates bus and bus restrictions. If lodge and bus disappeared, number of participants would be self governed by distance.
- Divert people to Lodge for lunch. Place has great atmosphere, which is partly due to limit imposed.
- Engine used to generate power for the Lodge is noisy and could be muffled better.
- Lodge generator noise and smell detract from serenity and scenery.
- Lodge clashes with wilderness.

Campground

- Campsites too small and too close to neighbour.
- Doors and windows in the food huts (closed in).
- Campsites too close together.
- Second wash-up area needed during rush hour.
- Safer environment cleaning agents in camp sites.
- Water quality at campground - make it safe.
- Need two sinks for so many people. Several smaller sites would be big improvement.
- One sink for all campers is not sufficient. Campers should be asked to be quiet at sink after 10 pm.
- Would be nice to have a campfire in campground.
- Campgrounds too wet, require better drainage.
- Tables at each campsite.
- Campsites need drains. Floods in heavy rain.
- More access to running water in campground.
- Provide drinking water at campsites.
- See suggestions on drainage system.. Re: drainage improvement for tent sites at campground.
- Toilet facilities and shelter - dissatisfied.
- Campground could have more cook houses.
- Water control.
- Turn campsite #3 into cookout shelter to prevent congestion.
- 1 or 2 more cook houses (site #3 good spot) would be good.
- Campers who do not observe good housekeeping.
- Good biffies!
- Lakes on our tenting pad.
- Try to make the camping spots larger.
- Tent pad flooded.
- Too many idiots around in shelters.
- Washrooms excellent facilities.
- Upgrade trails to the johns.
- Campground cooking shelters very cramped due to wet conditions.
- Day use shelter crowded for number of campers in bad weather.
- No further campground development.
- Accommodation too restrictive and stuffy (does not specify lodge, campground or ACC)
- Need safe water and more garbage disposal cans.
- Liked being able to have fires.
- Day use shelters too crowded when campsite full.
- Need 2 doors in kitchen shelter.
- Kitchen shelters should be enlarged.
- Have some tent spots more isolated.
- Need benches or tables at campsites.
- Campsites need open drainage holes.
- Campsites need a lot of improvements.

- Thought camping would be closer to lake.
- Campground too far from lake.
- Expected filtered water to be part of accommodation.
- Campsites very clean.
- On busy weekend water taps were shut off and only 1 outhouse available - unbelievable!! Large groups should be limited in size.
- Improve bathrooms and water supply.
- Small cook shelters good size. Larger ones create too much competition for space and loose friendliness.
- Shelters too small and too crowded.
- Shelters too small and crowded.
- Day use shelters too small, dark and overcrowded.

Day use shelter

- Requires more facilities for day visitors.
- Day use shelter good idea, especially with hot coffee.
- Some benches and roofing below the lodge would be a helpful improvement, for day visitors. There was a downpour while we waited for bus and the verandah became very crowded and little seating for weary hikers.
- Day lodge needs to be finished.
- Place for day visitors to purchase lunch food.
- Have day use lodge for bad weather conditions.
- Day use shelter not finished.
- Day use shelter is very pleasant place to be.
- Designate eating areas other than day lodge.
- Extend hours of day hut to 6-7 p.m.
- Need picnic area other than day shelter.
- Day shelter was often closed.
- Obvious day use not tolerated by lodgers. Availability of day use shelter will be big help.
- Lodge service restricted to day users. Welcome day use shelter.
- Day lodge great.

5.3 Information

Trail Signs

- Trail signs falling apart.
- Place sign posts along the trails pointing to the various mountains (naming them).
- Would like to see signs pointing at different views.
- More specific signs.
- Signage similar to that at Kananaskis would be helpful.

Too Many Signs

- Signposts overdone - too many - hard to get lost anyway.
- Too many signs.
- Area around lake loaded with too many signs.

Need More Signs

- Top of All Souls needs a trail sign pointing the way down.
- One or two additional trail markers between Wiwaxy Gap and Waterfall when approaching Lake Oesa - very easy to get off trail at steep spot.
- Need better signs indicating Wiwaxy Gap Alpine trail.
- Occasionally would have appreciated additional signs.
- Opabin Plateau could have more accurate sign coming down east, west route confusing.
- Sporadic placement of rock cairns on Yukness Ledge Alpine trail made it difficult to locate trail.

Include Distances on Signs

- Trail markers indicating distance to go.
- Distance indicators on trails.
- Signs should trace distances.
- Signs should have distances listed.
- Mark trails signs with distance to locations. It is hard to plan to be back to bus on time when you don't know distances.
- With trail signs there is no indication of how far trail is.
- Need distances on signs.
- Indicate direction and distances on signs.
- Trail signs should show time, distance, difficulty and elevation.
- Would like length of trails posted in kms.
- Indicate distances and direction on trail signs.
- Would be helpful to have distances of various trails or the time required to return from a certain point to Lake O'Hara.
- Be helpful to have number of km on trail markers so hikers know how far to destination.

Maps

- Would have liked more detailed maps available, with at least heightlines and alpine routes indicated (e.g., routes to Duchesney, Abbot & Odaray Pass cannot be found on any map; also routes to summits like Yukness).
- Make maps more readily available (topographical).
- Need more trail maps.
- There are no free maps.
- Better trail maps.

Interpretation

- Didn't know were any naturalist talks - would have attended if known.
- Continue education process - on bus, naturalists talks - personal contact best.
- Educate visitors.
- Did not encounter interpretation services.
- Voluntary nature hike would be educational.
- Guided tours in alpine trails.
- Guided tours in alpine trails.
- Need more instruction about staying on trails.
- Increase education. Should have park naturalist for summer months.
- Interpretive services should be daily not weekly.
- Continue to educate public to avoid damage.
- Provide more information with clothing suggestions.
- Information on where to pick up 3/4 minus gravel and where to drop off to assist trail maintenance given at start of bus ride. Information on recent sightings of wildlife.
- Level of 'naturalist talks' seems to be at an all time high throughout National Parks, lets not have any more.
- Unaware of naturalist talks.
- Provide more information on geology, fauna and flora of the area.

5.4 Parks Staff

- Public relations from Parks staff could be improved.
- Did not see Parks staff.
- Lecture by parks staff at Lake O'Hara gate made us feel talked down to.
- Few park staff
- Would like to see stronger presence of park personnel in area.
- Never saw any Parks staff.

5.5 Visitor Management

Bus and Reservations

Bus Schedule

- Earlier bus (8:30 am & 9:30 am).
- Need earlier bus in morning.
- Bus leaving 20 minutes late from parking - less time for hiking.
- 4:00 p.m. too early for day hikers to leave.
- Have later bus going out.
- Run bus in at 8 am, 9 am, and 10 am. Run bus out at 4 pm, 5:30 pm and 7 pm.
- Later bus going out (6:00 pm) so can spend more time on trails.
- Need later bus.
- Need bus going out between 6 and 7 pm.
- Bus should leave for parking lot at 5 pm.
- Should be one more trip on Saturday (8:30, 9:30, 10:30, etc.)
- Staggered times for bus trip down. Possibly allowing people to have dinner before leaving.
- Would like more time in area. Have a bus leave at 8 am and return at 6 pm.
- Should be bus going from Lake O'Hara later then 4 pm, about 6 or 7 pm during summer months.
- Last bus should leave lake at 6 - 7 pm.
- Later bus out would be helpful.

Error in Reservation

- There was incorrect reservation made for our first choice day (1 month advance). We were able to discover error on planning to confirm, but could well have been disappointed otherwise.
- Error made on initial booking had to come with intended group on the following day.
- Made reservation for 4, when phoned to confirm, reservation was only for 3. The Parks people would not rectify their mistake by letting one more person go, so we had to arrange for following day instead.
- The reservation was made incorrectly. Luckily we made more than one call to confirm the booking.
- Reservation not passed to people from Field.

Reservation System

- We were lucky to get in on a cancellation.
- Had to call 4 - 5 times before getting through.
- Phone numbers not correct.
- Change bus reservations to reduce no shows - charge fee when reserve - no show/no refund. Also restrict number seats that can be reserved by 1 person (ie: 1 person reserve for only 4 people)

- Could not make first night reservation and parks staff cancelled second night. There should be warning to people that failure to maintain schedule can result in loss of reservation.
- Camp reservations made for 2 days. Not able to arrive on first day and reservations for second day were cancelled. Reservations made well before trip.
- Got in on cancellation. Should have greater access to Park and bus could be earlier.
- Some space (say 10 spaces) should be left open until 1 month or 2 weeks ahead - for people on shift work - so can book when know schedule.
- Observed that several people had to wait for 11:30 bus (coming in) for which they had reservations, even though the 8:30 bus had empty seats.
- First come first serve.
- Do you take in account that written reservations from Europe take longer by mail?
- People should plan their holidays. This means making reservations.
- Reservation system should be apparent to casual and other intending visitors. The warden should not have to support the restrictions face to face with people who have made efforts to catch bus and are disappointed/angry.
- Restrictive times when reservation office open.
- Toll free number to Yoho National Park from Alberta and British Columbia would be nice. Easier to make bus reservations.
- Had 'day use' friend with us and even though bus was NOT full, they could not come.
- Bus system.
- Keep bus system. Maybe allow a few more buses of course keep the car out.
- Would like to be able to come on short notice.
- Modify reservation system to allow full buses.
- Couldn't get reservation for day requested, took chance on stand-by, 9 people (stand-by) got on bus. Both buses (2 each way) in and out of Lake O'Hara were more than 1/2 empty. There were an additional 4 hikers wanting to go hiking for day but were turned back.
- Feel buses are under-utilized, yet hard to get on.
- Had to reschedule, change in plans.
- Bus fare tough on families with several children.

Access

- Quota system causes friction.
- Increase summer hours for day use to at least 6:00 p.m.
- Essential that access be restricted, but not that lodge guests should have preference.
- People doing Alpine routes (climbing) should be allowed in the area even if hikers are at their capacity.
- A day visit allows only moderate walking (6-7 hrs). An increase of overnight visitors would be more interesting.
- Day Use Quota: Double.
- Change day use quota? Depends on how many other trails are developed.
- Object to limited access based on finances.
- Change day use quota? Seniors and disabled people only.
- Increase day use by 30. Keep reservation system. Charge 25.00 deposit on campsite to reserve.
- Keep it accessible to us ordinary average people - neither rich nor eco-fascists.

Crowding

- Concerns about crowding? Only if it becomes hard to get into the area.
- Concerns about crowding? It's number of groups that is critical.
- Restrict parties to 4 people or less.
- Saw group of 15+ - should be controlled - hike in small groups.
- This is a very beautiful area - do not expect a wilderness experience. The more that can see it the better.
- As many people as possible should see area without increasing quota - limit number of times could come in and number of days at the lodge (as for campground).
- Seems like a very high day use area.
- Usually ok - sometimes crowding unavoidable when several groups decide to hike same trail, or some trails closed.
- Encourage use of lesser known trails.
- Current levels ok but crowding does detract from enjoyment.
- Concerns about crowding? Fear abuse of trails and possibility of maintaining serenity.
- Too many groups on alpine routes.
- The trail into Lake McArthur was busier than any other trail.
- Concerns about crowding? Depends more on quality not quantity of people.
- Concerns about crowding? could be managed by providing options to more popular trails.

Management

- Banning of mt. bikes on road really upsets me. Make it open to all vehicles or close it completely.
- Want a free back country site to hike to instead of paying for a day use site.
- Beautiful but concerned with extensive development.
- Feel it should open up later and close earlier to give alpine area time to rebuild trails that have been trampled.
- The reason I like this area is because of the way it is managed.
- More active fisheries management.
- Allow mt. bikes on access road.
- Keep road closed.
- Make everyone walk from the highway.
- Allow people to come in to eat at Lodge, walk lake and leave. (4 pm for dinner - A short stroll and leave.) 12 pm - 4 pm for lunch and walk. Sell meal ticket combination and limit walk to Lake O'Hara circle.
- Need trail host.
- Public must be reminded that National Parks are for preservation of special eco-systems not for tourist development.
- I am glad to see trails and facilities maintained. Would support increased campsites, trails and Lodge size. Protection of park should not be at expense of public access.
- Two night maximum too short. Would have liked to stay 1 more night.
- Agree with system of control.

Question 22: What are your preferences for methods to control the number of people allowed into the area (for overnight or day use)? Do you have any other suggestions that you think might work?

Suggestions

- Limit total numbers in 3 categories - day hikers, campers, lodge.
- Concerned with growing elitism - priority to those at lodge or camping?
- First come first given entry might cause ill will.
- Limit number of entries per season for any individual. Daily educational talks on use, natural lone, etc.
- Would hate to come all the way out and then not get up on the bus.
- Access should be limited - but should be some reservations saved for shorter advance registration.
- Extend camping reservations to include 1 meal. Perhaps adding 1 extra bus load, both in and out.
- Run bus more frequently.
- Limit length of lodge guests stay.
- There has to be some form of limitation. A combination of reserving permits, first come first given entry & limitation of nights of stay including lodge guests.
- Do not increase bus service or enlarge overnight accommodation.
- Do not enlarge the places or accommodation and bus service.
- Reservations should be allowed only 2 - 3 weeks in advance.
- Possible a system that combines reservations and first come.
- This area is best preserved for future generations by the system now in use. Very few areas are handled the same, so let time tell consequences.
- A deposit of a nominal amount would help more positive reservations, other than that what you're doing is good.
- A limited number of stand-by tickets available for those who are unable to plan so far ahead. Allocation by phone the day before, no turn up and see - too much hassle for the staff.
- If people are prepared to walk up then that should be allowed. Definitely no cars, coaches or bikes though.
- A system of prioritizing ad-hoc day visitors would help.
- Same as present, but if you want to come and first come on chance of opening.
- Make them walk.
- Problem is not system, but management of system.
- membership scheme.
- Having park staff talk to people before they get off bus is a good idea.
- Differentiate those who will hike beyond the lake itself from those who just want to stay by the lake.
- Limitation on amount of time person can stay at lodge (same as 4 day limit at campground).
- Reservation in order of application.

- Why no limit to lodge stays? Why no limit to visits/season?
- Limit number of days people can stay at lodge (do not limit by wealth).
- Present system works good.
- Run bus all day.
- Parks should be carefully used - stop being so paranoid.
- Penalty for cancellation.
- No campers, only lodge and day visitors.
- Remove bus service.
- Larger split on reservation and first come first serve for campground sites.
- Eliminate bus service.
- Limit number visits/year.
- Perhaps a confirmation of reservation and first come ratio of 70:30.
- Solve reservation system problem.
- Have available permits, topographical maps with trails marked, accessibility, parking and use restrictions.
- More openings for first come first serve.
- Certain zones closed completely for a year or more.
- Like combination of first come first serve and reservations.
- Allow 1/2 to 2/3 enter by reservation. Allow balance on first come or early permit issued within 24-72 hours of day of entry.
- Increase tourism - sell Lake O'Hara stronger.
- Make people pay to make reservations.
- Have interested people read book on Rockies and pass exam to qualify.
- Get rid of hotel. Only allow day hikers or overnight campers. Put campsites at end of trails to spread out people.
- Reservation only fair way.
- Penalize those who don't cancel/show-up.
- Warden should have more time to give rules. Provide a booklet of rules.
- Close entire area for season to allow regrowth then allow only restricted number of people.
- 50% reservation 50% first come first serve.
- Allow late comers if day use or overnight have no show.
- Trails can support more traffic. Problem is people from lodge leaving trails.
- Penalize people for now show.
- Make everyone walk from highway, including lodge guests.
- Current system ok. Permanent custodian needed.
- Penalize no-shows.
- Black list no-shows.
- Current system best.
- Current system ok. Allow more openings.
- A reserved area for back packers separate from campers.
- Allow certain number per trail.
- Some way to fill spots of no-shows or cancellations to reservations.
- Some way to fill spots of no-shows.
- Encourage use of other trails other than Oesa.
- Maintain present restricted bus access.

- Preference to Canadians, quota for others.
- Support current reservation system. Increase day use numbers.
- Maintain present limited access system but disassociated overnight and day users. Have organized and supervised walks/hikes for day users.
- Preference to Canadians.
- Combination of reserving with limited number of first come.
- I think a mix of last three suggestions may work.
- Present system seems to work
- Public education from park staff. It is difficult to deal with public - parks staff allow their thinly disguised contempt to show too easily.
- Maybe people should be more encouraged to cancel if unable to keep reservation.
- Patience with all.
- Make access more difficult by maybe running busses three times per week like Assiniboine Chopper access.
- Trail closures during season where greater environmental impact is maybe 1 solution. Some day visitors could be allowed in on a first come system.
- There could be an allowance for first come basis for day use.
- In addition to present entry system, which I have found to be satisfactory, it would be niece to combine it with a limited number of seats available for first come visitors.
- Something perhaps to look after us foreign tourist hikers.
- Same problem in Australia. More national parks needed with areas zoned as limited access, wilderness or well serviced areas for heavier use with the two kept reasonably separate.
- Not right for people to book so far ahead and not show up. Maybe pay when reserve.
- Some limit necessary. Want to be able to plan ahead.
- Open up and promote other areas, the limited access attracts people.
- Combination of advance reservation and first come seems to work well for wilderness areas in California. If large number of applicants are turned away consistently, you are probably forced to the lottery system.
- Current system fine, however, increase quote slightly.
- More education by Parks Canada on proper park use. More modest priced Lodge to allow other than rich to enjoy the park.
- More education into preserving nature. Perhaps restrict Lodge use.
- Seems to be working quite well now.
- Don't increase bus ride cost, then only rich can get in.
- Make people pay in advance. If no show, use money for trail maintenance.
- A method to eliminate no show would be useful. (Payment in advance - non-refundable).
- Combination of reservation and first come seems ok.
- More buses available for day visitors. Last bus out at 6 pm.

Walk-in Suggestions

- Restrict group size to maximum of 6. Control number of day users by decreasing size and frequency of buses.
- Increase first come campsites but still limit them.
- Limit number of day users (busing) so overnight users and rest of day hikers can have a more quality 'back-country' adventure.
- Need to have some permits available on daily basis for people who can't plan so precisely.
- Reservation period should be 1 week, with a deposit. Deposit lost if no show.
- Quota system is fine. Should not be any day visiting.
- Don't advertise. Use work of mouth.
- Reserved area for 'back packers' separate from 'campers'.
- Written reservation and deposit.

Staff suggestions

- restrict length of stay
- restrict frequency of return

Question 23: What are your preferences for methods to manage visitor activities at Lake O'Hara? Do you have any other suggestions that you think might work?

Suggestions

- Everything as it is - all in moderation.
- Physical alterations ok only if alter man-made, not natural things (eg. bridge ok, tree not).
- No horses.
- Encourage proper use of trails as you do already.
- Friendly trail signs indicating trails closed for regrowth.
- People should stay on the paths you make for them to hike.
- Bus monopoly should end - why not allow 20 bikes/day to ride up, lock up at Lake (none allowed on trails).
- Do not change type of activities allowed.
- The system now in place has seemed to work.
- No bikes, brides should stay.
- I like alpine but would walk miles to avoid streams so appreciate bridges.
- Leave as is - present management is great - no changes.
- Leave area as is present management acceptable.
- Numbers of fish taken to 2/day and also size to over 34 cm.
- A nature guide might e a good idea.
- Better orientation for visitors prior to area entry.
- Some organized trips for people who want them.
- Registration at Warden's station prior to hiking so trail use can be monitored and controlled.
- Make more primitive not remove bridges completely.
- More education of fragile nature of area.
- Educational program.
- No mountain bikes.
- Change fish limit form 5 to 2.
- More education to visitors.
- Trail improvement will limit or lessen environmental damage.
- Post types for smart campers.
- Continue with current system
- Remove bus service.
- Don't overdevelop trails.
- Every visitor should attend speech/slide shows.
- Less promotion, less paper.
- Control numbers on trails.
- No horses, bikes.
- Leave as is.
- Let people enjoy the scenery by themselves.
- Daily naturalists let walks to encourage casual day hikers to use dry trails and save areas.

- Remove bridges temporarily with signs indicating why.
- Get a more wilderness and less hotel orientation to the patrons.
- Stop bus service or cut down.
- Lake loop should be wheelchair accessible.
- If the area is too ecologically vulnerable, close area to all or reduce season.
- Personal contact of park staff.
- Education re: trails.
- More information to visitors and overnight guests on how they must help protect environment.
- Parks should do a study of the impact of crowds on plant & animal life.
- More warden time on trails.
- Strongly support guided hikes.
- Do not allow horses.
- Never allow horses.
- Area should be restricted to hiking, climbing & fishing.
- Limit fishing only if fish population threatened.
- Would like to ride in on Mt. bike, then hike.
- Naturalist to meet with hikers and campers to answer questions and give information on trail conditions. Improve trail signs (direction, information).
- Guided walks.
- Restrict people at start as to what can and cannot do - but once there, leave them to enjoy nature.
- Education. Manage is wrong word for the way parks staff should look at the public.
- A little more evidence of staff would remind visitors of their responsibilities.
- Educating visitors is very important.
- There should be better education through interpretive programs and park staff rather than interpretive signs.
- Horses maybe, if limited. No mountain bikes.
- Explain to people why there are rules and quota.
- Something should be done about no shows.
- Close areas if over used.
- If bridge led to area without trails and damage would occur - support. If no danger of this strongly object to bridge removal.
- Educate users on proper use.
- Stress fragility of the areas. Needs to be some restrictions on the Lodge.
- Credit card deposit system - penalties for no shows.

Walk-in Suggestions

- Mountain bikes should be allowed on road, but not on trails. Monitor fish population and close or restock as necessary.
- Allow mountain bikes access to end of road.
- Leave as natural as possible.
- Need not be any fishing.
- Never let horses in. They destroy trails and leave mess for hikers.
- Make it a hike in reserve area.

Question 24: What do you think about the following? Do you have any other suggestions that you think might work?

Suggestions

- Is the problem too many people? If you have people who care about the area the numbers can go up. If you inform the people how to take care of the area then you can regulate from there. But you must regulate the area some how.
- Develop total quota - w/day/camper/lodge a piece of ... if need to decrease numbers, lower total and consider reducing camping/lodge.
- Leave everything as is.
- A1-Warden has great knowledge - should be meeting people on bus & telling trail conditions, etc.
- A brochure showing realistic planning times to be able to reserve, as well what realistic expectations should be. This place not for ordinary tourist.
- Put distances in km.
- Maps should contain all names used on trail markers. Maps and trail markers should indicate distances.
- What is already in place works very well. Lake O'Hara would be ruined by more traffic.
- Staggered trail use seems to happen naturally with the different bus arrival times. Too many rules and regulations would decrease the pleasure of the visit (staggered start times and one-way trail systems).
- With a bit of topographical information people could decide their level of ability.
- More circuits on some trails.
- A complete trail map that helps spreading people about.
- Some of the alpine trails may need more directions for less experienced. Accompanied trails led by an experienced guide on limited dates.
- Peoples choice and use of trails once they are up here should not be restricted or regulated. Advice about condition on trails is very useful.
- Over-regulation is as bad as under-regulation.
- Suggest appropriate foot gear for each trail (ie. boots only or runners accepted).
- Cost of host not necessary, use of map meets needs.
- Strongly advocate continuation of the present system
- Suggest ensuring that those who do enter 1) wear appropriate gear 2) adhere education program and instructions.
- Clock in cards for the trail and when too many people stop entrance because full. You can get a tickets the day before.
- Staggered times not required with current quota system in place.
- Make sure people stay on trails.
- If over regulate you lose sense of freedom.
- No improvements necessary.
- Responsible use of area more crucial than number of people.
- Limit lodge guests stay to 4 nights (like everyone else). NO bikes, horses. More education.

- Fishing management has to be an active program as opposed to passive observation.
- Day-use climbers should be allowed access to climbing.
- Visitors should know about hiking and should require a minimum orientation.
- Remove bus service.
- Current system super.
- Indicate distance on trail signs.
- Anything too programmed or organized spoils experience.
- Improve metric maps.
- Improve trail descriptions.
- Improve maps and staff available.
- One-way trail system and staggered start times most needless.
- Guides available or naturalist led walks.
- Color code maps.
- Do not give people help and this may stop many of the hard access from even biking.
- Better explanation of alpine routes on maps.
- Do not mention trails hi-lites so people choose their own trail and everyone doesn't crowd best trail.
- Perhaps allowing only those in that attended a parks environmental impact seminar.
- More monitoring of visitors activity and much stiffer fines for those who chose not to obey rules.
- Show distances and time on signs.
- Bring back old wooden map.
- Protect area by providing guided hikes rather than limiting number daily visitors.
- Arrange for 8:30 - 12:30 and 12:00 - 4:30 use with bus returning at noon. 4:00 - 8:00 and return to road.
- Average time posted for each trail.
- Signs indicating approximate length of hike.
- Important to have a one way trail to Lake Oesa if numbers increased.
- Mileage posted from point of start.
- Pay showers with plugs for hair dryers at parking lot. Rental towels available. Like biffies.
- Do not expand overnight camping or lodge use. Room for more day hiking use.
- Guided walks would address all items.
- Safety suggestion list: weather, trail safety, equipment, clothing, liquid.
- System good. Trail maps great. Trails exceptional.
- Trail maps should also indicate possible ore estimated time to complete hike - even if it's something like: easy trails approximately 6 km/hr; intermediate trails approximately 4 km/hr; difficult trails approximately 2 km/hr.

- I like the small topo map, but would like to see elevations changes to even meters. Also think it would be good to stress how difficult some of alpine routes are.
- Talk on bus should be current. If they don't know trail information they should say so.
- Maps need to have contour intervals of 25 m and trail location a bit more accurate.
- Cut out bus. Would probably reduce usage a lot. I would not favour this except as a desperation move.
- Topographical maps on request.
- Provide topo maps upon request.
- Making mountains accessible to all is important.
- More buses so a controlled number of visitors could go up for 1 day. A later bus would be required to come out about 6 pm. Coffee shop open till then.

Walk-in Suggestions

- Maps as above can be combined with trail guide on bulletin boards in area.
- One map with level of difficulty and brief description of at least most popular trails and a guide to link needs and interests may work.
- One way trails would be advantageous in monitoring use on trails.
- List of skills and equipment required for each trail. List of vertical rise and average time along each trail.
- Maps showing length and approximate time it takes to complete.

5.6 Miscellaneous

- Saw a dying fish in the lake. Any problems here? What does the lodge do with its sewage?
- Should stock more lakes with fish.
- Build public road into area like Moraine Lake.
- Enjoyment lessened by vehicles on road.
- Rental of canoe or fishing equipment or climbing equipment.
- Have row boats available to rent. Coffee spot might be considered.
- Do not feel National Park handled the Crystal Cave problem properly. A naturalist could give daily or weekly hikes to cave.
- Should have rock climbing lessons.
- Let leashed dogs back on bus.

6.0 Observations and Conclusions

This chapter presents some observations and conclusions about the Lake O'Hara Visitor Study. It is anticipated that Chapters 2 to 4 will provide the documentation and statistical support needed for the Area Plan, and that Chapter 5 will provide specific suggestions for change within the Planning Area. This chapter is intended to highlight some of the patterns observed in the study, not as a summary of the findings.

Overall, respondents are very satisfied with Lake O'Hara. Visitors come to Lake O'Hara for it's beauty, ease of access, and variety of trails. Many have been to O'Hara before, and all would gladly come again. There is strong support for the current management system, and opposition to many options for change. However, some areas for improvement were identified in the questionnaires; some of these are discussed in this chapter.

It is important to remember that this study only surveyed people who were successful at getting into Lake O'Hara. People who could not get a reservation were not surveyed, and can be expected to have very different views about the current management system, particularly the quota/reservation system.

Quotas

A series of questions were asked about visitor quotas. There is strong support for the status quo. There is some support for increasing day use quotas slightly, but any increase can also be expected to generate some opposition. This must be balanced by the number of potential day visitors that are currently refused access to the area: more than twice as many were turned away than received reservations in 1989.

There were suggestions that the number of nights campers are allowed to stay be extended; however, as only five percent of campers currently stay the maximum four nights, this is not a major problem.

There were complaints about large groups hiking together. This increases the feeling of crowding, especially if the large groups are loud, or wander off the trails. Survey results indicate the largest groups are from the Alpine Club of Canada. Current Park policy is that no more than 10 people hike together; this is not always followed, in particular by ACC visitors. The Park and ACC should initiate an education program with ACC members, to ensure no group larger than 10 hikes together.

Management

There is strong support for the current management techniques, and very little support for the other options identified in the questionnaire. However, there is strong support for maps showing trail difficulty, or for a trail guide linking visitor needs and interests to the appropriate trail. The pattern seems to be that respondents would like more information to make their own, informed choices, but do not want imposed controls.

Comments about maps and signage were similar. Visitors would like more information about the hikes: some combination of how long the various hikes are, how difficult, the time needed to hike them, and the elevation change. One respondent's suggestion is to develop a rating of difficulty (as is used for downhill skiing), with either the distance of the hike or the time an average hiker would need. This is particularly important at Lake O'Hara, as visitors need to get back in time for the last bus; otherwise they may have to walk out at the end of the day. This information could be provided on maps and on signs. Some respondents requested more signs, and more information on the signs, while others felt there are currently too many signs. This needs to be balanced carefully.

Services

The two areas regarding service that most clearly need change are the bus schedule and interpretive services. There were many comments about the bus schedule, in particular suggesting a later bus. Currently, the last bus leaves Lake O'Hara at 4:30 p.m. This is very early for hikers on full-day hikes. It is assumed this time was chosen by Lodge staff to not conflict with other staff duties (such as serving dinner); we recommend that Parks and Lodge staff look into alternatives for providing a later bus. There were additional suggestions for changes to the bus schedule - these are presented in Chapter 5.

Interpretive services and parks staff received the lowest ratings when respondents were asked about a number of factors, including the variety of trails, accommodation, and day use shelter. Forty percent of respondents are very satisfied with parks staff, and 19 percent with interpretive services, compared with 66 percent with the variety of trails, and 52 percent with accommodation (note that while these factors received the lowest ratings, they were rated satisfactory). The only explanation for these lower ratings were comments such as "didn't see any staff", or "what interpretive programs?".

Trails and Campground

The greatest number of comments regarding facilities were made about the trails and the campground. Chapter 5 (p. 51-53) contains specific comments about trail conditions and development, in particular about over development of Opabin, and muddy trails resulting in hikers walking around the mud, damaging the environment. Suggestions were made for specific areas needing work, along with offers to haul gravel while hiking, to help with trail maintenance.

Many of the most consistent concerns were about the campground. There were many complaints, especially regarding water quality, availability of cooking shelter space, size of sites, crowding of sites, and drainage. Improvements to the campground would reduce many frustrations of campers, and further improve satisfaction with Lake O'Hara generally. Comments in Chapter 5 (p. 55-56) should provide ample direction on what improvements would be appreciated.

Park/Lodge Relationship

While working on this study, it became apparent that the relationship between park staff and visitors, and lodge staff and visitors, is not always amicable. The consultants observed this problem, and while there were no questions about the relationship between the Lodge and the Park in the questionnaire, some respondents chose to make comments, some very strongly. For example, some Lodge guests found the CPS welcome on the bus rather condescending, while some campers and day users found Lodge staff unfriendly. At times, there appears to be an "us and them" relationship between lodge staff and guests, and park staff and visitors. This is both divisive and unnecessary.

Survey results indicate that the profile of Lodge guests is very similar to other park visitors. In particular, the experience level and the amount of outdoor activity of Lodge guests is very similar to other park visitors. Lodge guests took more day trips than either day visitors or campers, and more overnight and longer trips than day visitors, on average. The experience level of Lodge guests was very similar to that of day visitors; for both groups, just over 50 percent were comfortable on a one-day hike, with a further 32 percent comfortable on weekend or one week backpacking trips.

The major difference in profile is that Lodge guests are older than other visitors, and are likely to have been to Lake O'Hara more often than other visitors. (They may also have significantly higher incomes, but there were no questions in the survey about income). It appears that Lodge guests are the same type of people as other visitors, simply older. There is no reason for Park staff to treat Lodge guests any differently than other park visitors; they are all park visitors, all are interested in the welfare of the area, and many are committed to returning year after year. Likewise, Lodge staff should treat all Park visitors with courtesy; after all, today's campers and day visitors could be tomorrow's Lodge guests.

There are a number of things that could be done to reduce the antipathy between the two groups. First, examine all current activities for actions or words that may be offensive to the other group, and eliminate these things. In particular, the welcome on the bus was mentioned by some Lodge guests, and bus drivers were criticized by some day visitors and campers. Another area that offends visitors is the bus fare. Some visitors do not know that part of the fee goes to trail maintenance. In addition, some visitors find the fare very high, especially for families. Perhaps a family rate could be instituted, or the overall fare reduced.

Second, ensure any current cooperative efforts are publicized. In particular, ensure bus users know a portion of the bus fee is for trail maintenance, and some covers the expense of the bus. Other topics include how the day lodge is operated (food and staff provided by the Lodge to the Trails Club).

Third, look for ways to integrate services, and to develop joint or cooperative services. For example, consider interpretive services of interest to Lodge guests as well as other visitors, perhaps evening talks or short interpretive evening hikes for overnight visitors, and enlisting help from Lodge guests as well as other visitors for trial maintenance (such as the current program of packing in gravel to predetermined spots on the trails).

Conclusion

In conclusion, respondents were very satisfied with Lake O'Hara, their visit, and how their expectations were met. There were only relatively minor aspects of the management of the area that were of concern, most of which could be modified with relative ease by the Canadian Parks Service.